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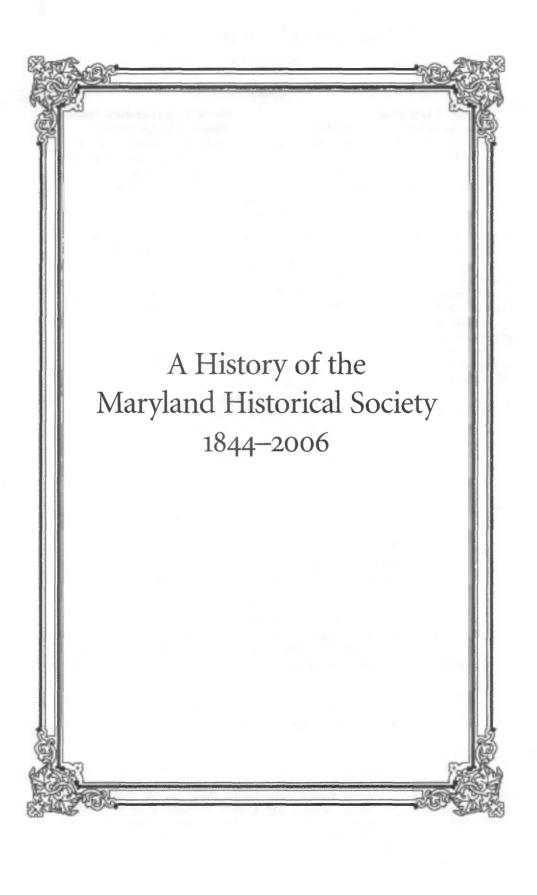
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MARYLAND

Historical Magazine

VOLUME 101, NO. 4 (WINTER 2006)

A History of the Maryland Historical Society

1844-2006

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Editor's Note:

Welcome to this special issue of the Maryland Historical Magazine, a history of the society that has supported this acclaimed journal since its inception in 1906. Samuel Hopkins, fifty-year member and officer of the MdHS, commissioned this tribute to the oldest continuously operating cultural institution in the state, and we thank him. All who worked on this project gained insight as to where we, as an institution, have been in the past. That knowledge will help define us as we move forward in this new century. We also thank guest editor Robert J. Brugger, former editor of this journal, author of Maryland A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980, and currently Senior History Acquisitions Editor at the Johns Hopkins University Press. The spring 2007 issue is a return to our standard format, the best new work in Maryland history, book reviews, and notices of upcoming conferences.

P.D.A.

Cover Photo: The Enoch Pratt House, 2006 (photo by David Prencipe.)

The Maryland Historical Magazine welcomes submissions from authors and letters to the editor. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. All articles will be acknowledged, but only those accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will be returned. Submissions should be printed or typed manuscript. Address Editor, Maryland Historical Magazine, 201 West Monument Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21201. Include name, address, and daytime telephone number. Once accepted, articles should be on 3.5-inch disks (MS Word or PC convertible format), or CDs, or may be emailed to panderson@mdhs.org. The guidelines for contributors are available on our Web site at www.mdhs.org.

Guest Editor's Notebook

As a history major at Towson State University, Patricia Dockman Anderson rightly found the intellectual and cultural life of nineteenth-century Baltimore fascinating. In the summer of 1994 she contributed an essay to a special Maryland Historical Society Sesquicentennial issue of the magazine, a piece exploring the relationship between Herbert Baxter Adams, founder of professional history at Johns Hopkins, and his contemporary, J. Thomas Scharf, impresario researcher with a sharp nose for commercial success. She next began work on a history of the Maryland Historical Society, and as her long view of the society and its evolving work neared completion, we on the publications committee hoped to see it into print as a monograph under the society imprint. But there were many books to produce, and we felt bound to postpone the project, once or more. Then a solution presented itself, and thus we have this extremely special issue of the magazine. In it—without precedent, we believe—we produce a slender volume that will give every member and many a reader an appreciation for the long story of the society and the changes it has undergone since its founding during the presidency of John Tyler.

None of this would be possible without the support of a Baltimorean, Samuel Hopkins, whose name instantly brings to mind service to worthy causes. A devoted husband and father who saw action in the Pacific as a naval officer in World War II, he worked for many years at Fidelity and Deposit, Equitable Trust, and Alex Brown. No stranger to public life and community needs, he had helped in 1941 to found the Citizens Planning and Housing Association; after the war he won election to the House of Delegates, stood for Congress, and in 1955 ran for mayor as a reform Republican. All the while Sam devoted himself to an abiding passion, Maryland history. He served as Maryland Historical Society treasurer (1956-1970), president (1970-1976), and board chairman (1988-1990). Filling offices did not suffice, however, and he has championed more than a few good ideas. They include the history of philanthropy in Baltimore, research on antislavery in Maryland, and, by way of Civic Works, Inc., restoration of Johns Hopkins's country house, Clifton. He has been the corporate memory and a guiding light of our publications committee. No one who has served on that committee can forget his reminders that once we had the benefaction of the Carnegie Endowment; that we have high standards to meet; and that books (or their equivalent) pave a royal road to understanding. We have, he says, a lot of publishing to do before we rest. Sam asked Pat to write this history and provided the funding for this special issue. His steady support of the Maryland Historical Magazine, the society publications program, and this effort to study the history of the society itself deserve heartfelt thanks from everyone who cares about research and writing on Maryland history. We thank him.

Introduction

In 1844 the founders of the Maryland Historical Society declared their house of history a "temple of Maryland memories and of Maryland fame." One hundred and sixty-two years later the society occupies its third home, where the founders' portraits and pictures grace the gallery walls and their books fill the library shelves. These pieces of nineteenth-century history memorialize Baltimore's cultural leaders and open the door into the world that gave birth to the society.

The portraits show what is in some ways a common personality. John Pendleton Kennedy with his slightly tilted raised eyebrow and cleft chin,² John H. B. Latrobe's deep-set dark eyes and reddish beard, and John Spear Smith's narrow face crowned with slick dark hair display a striking similarity of pose and a near uniformity in the fine cut dark clothing over white linen. The several artists also captured a singular poise, one suggesting quiet intelligence and confidence born of success. Some portraits hint at arrogance; others depict the subtle glint of humor in the eye.

The founders' presence extends to the library, where volumes inscribed in the owners' bold hands offer entré to the intellectual realm of these men. Catalogued volumes of Edward Gibbon's *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* rest beside books the founders themselves wrote. Many volumes contain a memorial tribute. Cracked, leather-bound journals hold the lessons of successful political, legal, and commercial careers. A lost social world emerges from the mottled pages of an occasional diary or sheaf of brittle letters.

The library also holds the society's records in stacks of boxes containing ledgers and papers, preserving its history in remarkable detail. The curious can explore these accounts and step into the lives of Baltimore's leaders for a glimpse at the forces and events that shaped the early society, laid the city's cultural framework, and directed the study of Maryland history for generations.

On looking at the remarkable history of the Maryland Historical Society, one can also see how it transformed itself, from a gentlemanly, preservation-minded group, membership by election, to a world-renowned and all-welcoming center for scholarship and a variety of programs. Today, the society faces a far more challenging mandate than in the early years. The exclusive emphasis on colonial and revolutionary heroes is long obsolete—today's state history includes all of its people and their diverse legacies over nearly four centuries.

The society's growth and development in general parallel those of similar institutions throughout the country. Since the closing years of the nineteenth century, all have reconfigured and reinvented their missions and identities in an

effort to make local history more accessible and more relevant to the public. The emphasis on exhibitions and public education and the efforts to acquire historical documents and artifacts, have demanded physical expansion and additional staff. Gone are the days when the only paid employee was a "boy to sweep the rooms," and when the society's officers and members cared for the collections, wrote state history, and managed the organization in comparative solitude.

Today's vision of the work of the society requires a team of professional historians, librarians, curators, registrars, educators, and fundraisers in addition to those who manage day-to-day operations. Yet look again, past the professionally designed galleries of silver, furniture, and portraits—the founders' mission of collecting, preserving, publishing, and diffusing Maryland history pulses strongly—honored and perpetuated through the efforts of the society's officers, staff, volunteers, and members.

P.D.A.

^{1.} Charles F. Mayer, "First Discourse Before the Maryland Historical Society," *MHS Pre-Fund Publications* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1844).

^{2.} This portrait of Kennedy hangs at the Peabody Institute. It is used in this description as it is the one that best reflects his personality.

The Maryland Historical Society

Incorporated by an Act of the Legislature

1844

Founders

Brown, George W. (1812–1890) lawyer

Brune, Frederick W. Jr. (1813–1878) merchant, director Savings Bank of Baltimore

Campbell, Bernard U. (1796–1855) editor U.S. Catholic Magazine, only Catholic founder

CAREY, JOHN L. (?–1852) editor Baltimore American, Md. House of Delegates 1843

COHEN, JOSHUA (1804–1870) only Jewish founder, physician

COLLINS, STEPHEN (1797–1871) physician

Donaldson, John J. (1788–1866) lawyer

GILMOR, ROBERT JR. (1808–1875) merchant, art collector, officer in cultural organizations

HALL, JAMES (1802–1889) physician, governor Cape Palmas, Liberia, 1837–1840

HARRIS, J. MORRISON (1817–1898) lawyer

Kennedy, John Pendleton (1795–1870) lawyer, writer, statesman

LATROBE, JOHN H. B. (1803–1891) lawyer, inventor, state militia

LESLIE, ROBERT CAPT. (1793–1872) sea captain, merchant, ship owner

LONG, ROBERT CARY (1810-1849) architect

LUCAS, FIELDING JR. (1781–1854) bookseller

MAYER, BRANTZ (1809–1867) lawyer

MAYER, CHARLES FRANCIS (1795–1864) lawyer, state senator

McMahon, John V. L.(1800–1871) lawyer, state legislator, wrote a state history in 1831

SMITH, JOHN SPEAR (1787–1866) lawyer, state senator

STREETER, SEBASTIAN F. (1810-1864) teacher, city council, cultural organizations

Talbot, William A. (1814–1859) lawyer

WALLIS, SEVERN TEACKLE (1816–1894) lawyer, writer, state legislator

^{*}Occupations and activities are those at the time of, or before, the founding of the MdHS; some went on to leading positions in the city's political and cultural arenas.

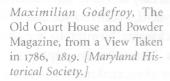


A Most Remarkable Group of Men

and to the hinterlands of western Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, antebellum Baltimore rose from a backwater hamlet to a commercial boomtown during the American Revolution. Thereafter its population soared from 13,500 in 1790 to more than 100,000 by 1840, making it the most rapidly growing urban center in the new nation.¹ The fortunes that made a handful of men rich during the Revolution, and which managed to survive the War of 1812 as well, stimulated hundreds of other businesses that in turn demanded a larger labor force. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the Canton Industrial Park, and textile mills dotting the Jones Falls attracted workers from nearby farms and immigrants from Ireland and Germany. This city on the borderland between North and South also housed slaves long after slavery had vanished from the northern states and a free black population whose workers competed with the new arrivals for jobs.²

The same forces that attracted capital and labor drew artisans whose legacy became the nineteenth century's middle class. Small merchants, printers, shoemakers, harness makers, and scores of other skilled craftsmen opened shops in the commercial district next to theaters and booksellers to serve the needs, whims, and fantasies of a busy, diverse population. While the artisans grew and prospered, increasing numbers of poor soon burdened the city's coffers, prompting the creation of ethnic benevolent societies and a head tax on new immigrants. Church spires beckoned Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Episcopalians, and Lutherans.³ National tensions growing from evangelicalism, abolition movements, temperance reform, and sectionalism, reflected themselves in city politics. Tough political gangs appeared, bullying newly enfranchised immigrant voters and dominating local elections, thereby earning the city its Mobtown reputation.

Four turbulent decades into the nineteenth century Baltimore's elite looked back nostalgically to what they preferred to remember as a simpler, more elegant time. They recalled the city as a vibrant community of merchants, lawyers, and public servants who lived in sturdy, colorful houses, worked in the counting rooms at the Merchant's Exchange, and argued their cases in the old courthouse. Their collective memory of early Baltimore was of the small town on the riverbank, where cornfields grew between Fells Point and Baltimore Town. Older citizens chuckled when they recalled that Robert Oliver once paid a servant to carry him



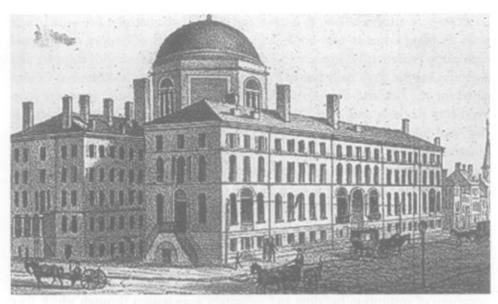


on his back when the Patapsco overflowed and rushed down Market Street. These wealthy men still saw sleek clipper ships, products of local shipyards and masters of the age of sail, anchored at the wharves. They could hear the water lapping at the graceful hulls as the customs house officer sounded the bells announcing the arrival of foreign ships down the bay.

These recollections also evoked social events such as plays at the Holliday Street Theatre, where after one performance an indignant matron wrote, "Imagine it! They had nothing on but flesh colored inexpressibles and a gauze petticoat reaching to the knee." Baltimoreans visited Peale's museum to view the mastodon and danced at the Assembly Room balls where, after a dinner at two o'clock in the

Baltimore, looking northwest from the Shot Tower, 1849. (Maryland Historical Society.)





The Merchant's Exchange, built in 1820 for "our most important dealing men . . . for the despatch [sic] of business," from Strangers Guide to Baltimore, 1852.

morning, merchants went directly to their counting rooms. Wealthy residents delighted in General Lafayette's 1824 visit and the ball in his honor. The "city's most beautiful young women showered him with flowers when he entered the hall."⁴

The men who wrote these memoirs recalled a patriarchal world led by public-spirited men who in memory had assumed still greater stature in the decades that followed. John Pendleton Kennedy remembered them to be a philanthropic and most refined upper class. "They were of the Venetian stamp, and belonged to that order of what the world calls merchant princes . . . not so much in magnificence as in aim and intention." ⁵

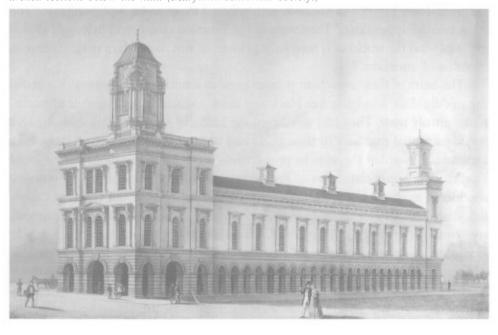
The heirs of these merchant princes grew to adulthood in a city with a growing middle class, a bulging free black and slave population, and legions of bumptious, unruly poor. They had weathered the financial panics of 1819 and 1837 that had bankrupted numbers of their peers and had watched in alarm as Jacksonian Democracy awarded the vote to propertyless men, many of whom barely spoke English. The upper class heirs of Protestant, Jeffersonian, republican government shuddered as shiploads of immigrants, many of them Irish and German Catholics, disembarked weekly at Locust Point until a cacophony of foreign tongues rose from the crowded docks, streets, and markets. The population of free blacks swelled in the aftermath of Nat Turner's rebellion, as local governments nationwide imposed tighter control and restricted their movement and activities.⁶

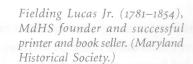
City leaders nostalgically reflected on the past while facing rapid and problematic change. They went about their daily work in the counting houses and courts where attorneys Brantz Mayer and John H. B. Latrobe presented their cases. Fielding Lucas Jr. sold books to a growing market of hungry readers, and merchants Frederick W. Brune and Robert Gilmor negotiated with shippers and suppliers for the city's daily needs. Physicians Joshua Cohen and Stephen Collins cared for the sick and the infirm. Beyond their working hours, attorneys John Pendleton Kennedy and John V. L. McMahon held Whig seats in the state legislature, and John L. Carey and teacher Sebastian F. Streeter served in the city government. Other members of this patriciate fulfilled their civic duty as park commissioners, harbor masters, and committeemen of local churches.

Baltimore's leaders formed charitable and philanthropic organizations to help offset the problems of the poor—hunger, disease, and cyclical unemployment in the pre-welfare world of the burgeoning city. Robert Oliver and Isaac McKim built free schools for children and homes for the aged, while Elisha Tyson became an early champion of emancipation. In Baltimore as well as other cities, leaders found a sense of mission and purpose and became part of a national phenomenon of institution building and voluntary associations through which they cultivated programs of "private cultural philanthropy."

Others put their efforts toward forging the city's cultural crown, and following Philadelphia, Boston, and New York they adopted the ancient classicism that cloaked the new national character. They read the classics, incorporated ancient political thought into Enlightenment philosophy for the principles of republi-

The Maryland Institute for the Promotion of the Mechanical Arts, chartered in 1825, built this grand hall, at Baltimore Street and Market Place, in 1851. The city's Center Market operated in the arched sections below the hall. (Maryland Historical Society.)







canism, and adopted the designs of ancient cities to define their place in the new nation.⁸ The Library Company of Baltimore provided the elite with the best classical and scientific literature. Claiming a pseudo-classical background, the Ancient Order of the Delphians assigned each of their members a muse and encouraged literary men such as John H. B. Latrobe, John Pendleton Kennedy, Francis Scott Key, and Samuel Woodworth to write for their magazine, the *Portico.*⁹ Talented architects Robert Cary Long, Robert Mills, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and Maximilian Godefroy designed monuments, theaters, churches, a cathedral, and stately homes that commanded attention and ornamented the city skyline with columns and domes reminiscent of Greece and Rome.¹⁰

The new cultural institutions attracted a prosperous middle class to lectures and exhibits at the Maryland Institute and the Maryland Academy of Science, both organized by Latrobe. Fielding Lucas and Joshua Cohen founded the Choral Arts Society and organized concerts for city residents. Art and science lovers patronized Peale's museum, where they viewed portraits, paintings, and natural history exhibits.

Many of these men also directed their energies toward preserving and promoting their heritage. Alarmed by the disgraceful condition of the state's historical documents, invested with a sense of civic responsibility, and determined to immortalize the patriotism, sacrifice, and heroism of the Revolution and the new nation, they joined a growing national trend of historical awareness and formed the Maryland Historical Society in 1844.¹¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson described this era as one in which Americans belonged to either the "party of memory" or the

"party of hope." Historical societies attracted both—those attracted to memory supported these organizations for their contribution to preserving the past and for inspiration and stability amidst the whirlwind of change in the new nation. Those who saw hope in the nation's amazing transformation from an agrarian to an industrial land looked to the past for guidance in the present and for the future.¹²

A Most Sacred Duty

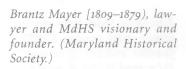
Brantz Mayer is credited with being the chief organizer of the Maryland Historical Society.¹³ The young attorney and man of letters came home to Baltimore after his father's death in 1843 following an extended European tour and a trip to Mexico with the U.S. delegation. Within months the founders of the society submitted their proposed charter to the state legislature and incorporated their venture in December 1843.¹⁴

In January 1844 they gathered in the Maryland Colonization Society rooms of the post office building for the first recorded meeting of the historical society. Within a week they had appointed officers and a librarian and formed committees to draft a constitution, write a membership circular, and find a suitable meeting place. They proposed collecting the remnants of the state's history and preserving their heritage through research, writing, and publications.¹⁵

The society's founders followed the lead and example of other East Coast societies in making collection, preservation, and publication their foremost concerns. The movement first developed in Boston, initiated by Jeremy Belknap's concern for the preservation of state papers. Belknap organized the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791 as an active and literary historical body committed to preservation and writing.¹⁶

Along the entire length of the Atlantic seaboard, historic documents lay in deplorable condition by 1800. New Englanders lamented the loss of the Thomas Hutchinson papers. South Carolinians found the Revolution's Committee of Safety Papers in Charleston, "among trash that was used to fill a mud hole in Calhoun Street." Community leaders from New England to the South saw the need for organized efforts to protect their past from neglect and the scissor-wielding autograph hunters who stalked state collections. Massachusetts and New York enthusiasts formed historical societies early, in 1791 and 1804, respectively. Of the thirty-two state societies founded before 1860, twenty-nine formed between 1820 and 1860, many in conjunction with the nation's fiftieth anniversary in 1826. 18

Maryland's course followed a similar path, and community leaders reacted to the loss and poor condition of the state's oldest papers. As early as 1708, John Oldmixon reported that "no suitable memoirs" remained with which to write a state history, and in 1730 Governor Benedict Leonard Calvert asked the General Assembly for a "suitable repository." State historians John Leeds Bozman and



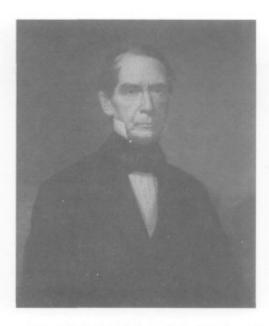


John V. L. McMahon also reported lost state documents, as did historical novelist John Pendleton Kennedy. National compilers Jared Sparks and Peter Force added their comments on the perilous condition of Maryland's papers.¹⁹

The Maryland Historical Society's 1844 charter specified that its purpose was to collect documents. In 1847, Kennedy, as state delegate, introduced the bill that gave the society's mission more authority and definition. The General Assembly passed a resolution to transfer to the society "all original records relating to Maryland before the Revolution that were in duplicate or in apparent . . . decay." This action left most of the state's papers in the Annapolis law library, for legislative reference use. Collecting and preserving the state's tangible past remained the society's primary goal for decades.

The society's 1844 circular also called on the state's influential citizens for membership and urged them not to let Maryland linger behind the other East Coast societies any longer. They closed their call for history with an itemized list of collectibles they wanted for the society's "cabinets," including government and personal papers, "Indian antiquities," coins, autographs, memoirs, genealogies, natural history specimens, orations and sermons, transactions of societies, topographical descriptions of towns, and travelers' accounts. The list included everything the founders believed would contribute to the history of the state, and their broad collection policy mimicked that of the eighteenth-century philosophical societies. They endowed every remnant of Maryland's past with historical value.²¹

Maryland's elite responded immediately to this plea, and the society's officers began recording the donations in the monthly minutes. They received Edmund Burke's speech *America*, the Journal of Congress 1775–1776, a lecture on the philosophy of history, a *Compendium of the 1840 Census*, family histories, political



John Spear Smith (1787–1866), lawyer, state senator, MdHS founder and first president. (Maryland Historical Society.)

pamphlets, books, a Massachusetts pine tree shilling, and a hammer made from the keel of Captain Cooke's *Endeavor*.²² Dozens of items arrived at the post office building every month, and by May of the first year recording secretary Sebastian Streeter could report that "donations deemed of sufficient interest and importance shall be referred to a committee." No record survives of the proposed criteria or what they may have rejected.²³

The society's undeniable success resonated through president John Spear Smith's first annual address as he congratulated the membership on their progress. He praised Maryland's past glories and declared that their children would look upon their work as "shining examples." In closing, Smith reminded his listeners that as members they bore a "sacred duty . . . not to be neglected." This first president must have felt a sense of accomplishment for the society and its members as he looked across the crowded meeting room. In little more than a year they had transformed their fledgling historical consciousness into an active organization dedicated to Maryland's, and the nation's, past.

Their membership stood at one hundred and fifty, more than six times the number that had gathered in the winter months of 1843 and 1844. The library boasted eight hundred bound volumes and hundreds of pamphlets, and their "cabinets" held dozens of artifacts. The *Baltimore American* published the society's monthly minutes, free of charge, to keep their activities in public view, and Mayer's correspondence with other organizations led to publication exchanges. The *Literary World* carried accounts of Maryland Historical Society activities throughout the nation, and the budget held enough funds to allow for more library purchases.

When the gavel fell after the first annual address, the founders of the Maryland Historical Society celebrated their success and reaffirmed their roles as the caretakers and perpetuators of Maryland's past.²⁵

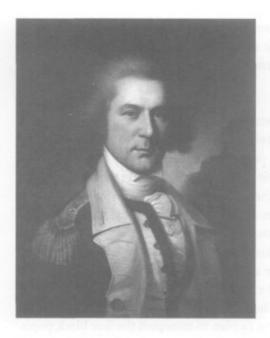
Gentlemen Scholars All

For many of these gentlemen history served as their "premier intellectual avocation," particularly those who had belonged to literary groups such as the Delphians.²⁶ These members fulfilled part of their membership responsibilities researching and writing. They read their papers at the monthly meetings and the society then published almost all of them.²⁷ The tracts reflect their fascination with colonial and revolutionary heroes as well as their use of history to define, defend, and explain contemporary issues.²⁸

John H. B. Latrobe explained in his *Memoir of Benjamin Banneker* that the reason he found the "memoir of a free coloured man is of interest" was because "the most interesting questions in the country are those connected with the coloured population . . . since it affects the character of the dominant race." Latrobe then discussed the merits of colonization (a plan to transport the free black population to Africa) and concluded that the effort could succeed only if the emigrants

Benjamin Banneker's (1731–1806) journal. (Maryland Historical Society.)

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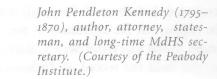
Otho Holland Williams [1747–1794], Revolutionary War hero and subject of MdHS member Osmond Tiffany's 1851 research and address to the membership. (Maryland Historical Society.)

had the skill and ability to build a community. He went on to relate Banneker's life in minute detail and declared him the best example—a self-taught man with no white blood.²⁹

Moses Sheppard also promoted colonization and produced a comparative study of slavery in Jamaica and the United States that shifted the blame for the institution back to sixteenth-century British commercial policy. His tables listed higher numbers of Jamaican and American slaves in the seventeenth century than the nineteenth and he reasoned that harsh treatment by the British in Jamaica accounted for a high death rate while the lower numbers for America reflected a large number of free blacks. Sheppard closed his thirteen-page study with the observation that colonization was an "auxiliary to the elevation of the coloured man."³⁰

Maryland Historical Society members wrote on a variety of topics, including the lives of military heroes Otho Holland Williams and Samuel Ringold, and religious, political, and state histories. They published their exhibit catalogues and an occasional patriotic poem, but the publication that drew heavy fire from the Catholic diocese and sparked a running argument in the press came from the pen of John Pendleton Kennedy.

Kennedy's essay on the "Life and Character of George Calvert, The First Lord Baltimore" challenged the traditional motives for Maryland's founding as a Catholic refuge. He argued that Calvert's primary motivation for settling the colony lay in commercial speculation. Kennedy presented Calvert's role as that of an investor, in the 1622 Avalon expedition to Newfoundland and in the Virginia Company, as irrefutable evidence. His careful study examined the Lord Baltimore's religious life as well, and he concluded that the proprietor had always been a





Catholic and lived his faith quietly to maintain his position at Court. Based on the failed first settlement in Newfoundland, Kennedy concluded that "colonization schemes were a favorite speculation of his and . . .[there is] no evidence [he was] stimulated by religious opinions."³¹ He summarized his argument with the conclusion that the "glory of Maryland toleration" rested in the charter from a Protestant king to a Catholic nobleman.³² With these words Kennedy gave King Charles the credit for Maryland's role as a religious haven.

A week later, Bernard Campbell's blistering response appeared in the *United States Catholic Magazine*. Campbell, the society's only Catholic founder, claimed Kennedy's work was filled with "crude opinions and doubtful theories" and dismissed it as the "privilege of a novelist [who] makes his own fancies pass for . . . truth." He charged the author with remarks that detracted from Lord Baltimore's character and made him appear "selfish in his motives and actions and a sycophant and a knave in politics and religion." Campbell then methodically dissected Kennedy's sources with the cool precision of a master surgeon and pronounced that the evidence supported the traditional version of Calvert's motives.³³

The debate did not end there. After Kennedy submitted a lengthy defense the magazine's editor, suspending editorial policy, stepped into the fray to side with Campbell. He scolded Kennedy's "labored efforts to falsify history" and went on to illustrate how Kennedy "displayed wonderful agility in escaping an argument." In a seven-page editorial he went on to uphold Campbell's argument and restore

the honor, character, and the official version of George Calvert's colonial mission. (Lord Baltimore experienced a Catholic conversion and, unable to remain at court with a clear conscience, left in good standing and founded the Chesapeake refuge.)³⁴ This interpretation remained in Maryland texts until the middle of the twentieth century.

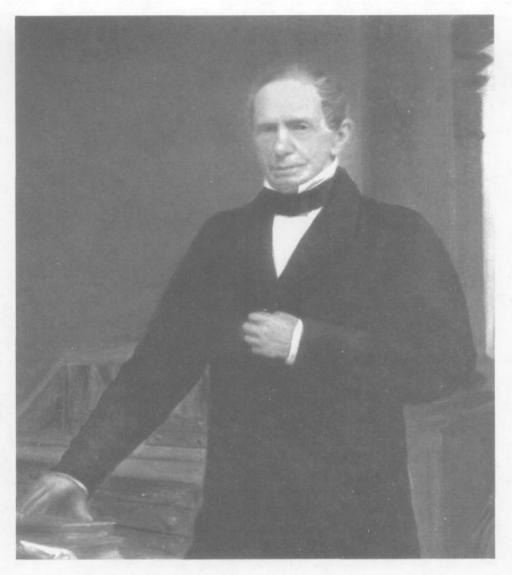
These writings offer an opportunity to understand the type of history the Maryland Historical Society's members promoted. Latrobe and Sheppard used history to further their political agendas in support of the colonization movement. Many of the society's members belonged to the Maryland State Colonization Society, and the historical society minutes hold the record of discussions promoting that project.

The bitter exchange regarding George Calvert's intentions demonstrated the founders' deep fear and resentment of the rising immigrant population. Maryland's Catholic identity no longer brought to mind the noble Lords Baltimore, the elite Carroll family, and the Basilica of the Assumption as the nation's first Roman Catholic diocese. Rather, antebellum Catholics in Maryland, particularly in Baltimore, brought instant and threatening images of ragged and hungry, often desperately ill immigrants assessed for a head tax and exercising their citizen's right to vote. By shifting Calvert's motives from religion to investments, Kennedy effectively removed Catholic power from what he saw as the state's glorious colonial past. The debate also illustrated how most of these gentlemen historians celebrated their personal histories through their writings. Kennedy invited defeat on this issue by violating the society's code of "examining the records for laudatory purposes" and for daring to challenge a legend.³⁵

A Temple of Knowledge

The society's undeniable success inspired plans for a permanent home. They had outgrown the colonization society rooms almost immediately, and increasing numbers of donated documents soon overflowed the fireproof safe at the Franklin Bank. The society needed more spacious quarters to meet their physical needs and to stamp their cultural imprint on the city. The minutes record the formation of a building committee led by John Spear Smith, Johns Hopkins, George William Brown, William McKim, and Robert Carey Long. One goal was to meet with the Library Company of Baltimore on the prospect of a joint venture. The committees of both organizations voted unanimously to adopt the building plan and incorporated the Trustees of the Athenaeum in December 1845.³⁶

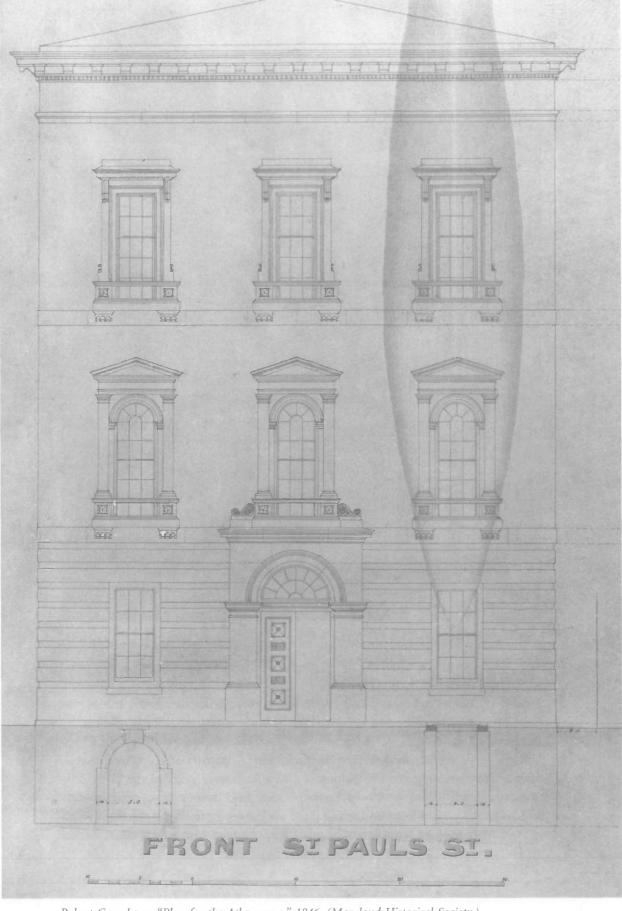
The move served both organizations well. The new historical society hitched its purpose to that of a venerable organization, one "cotemporary" with the city itself. The library company benefited from the society's energetic support. Many of the library company's members, including president Brantz



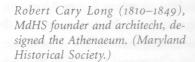
Johns Hopkins (1795–1873), early MdHS member, served on the Building Committee for the Athenaeum. (Maryland Historical Society.)

Mayer, William Rodenwald, and Frederick W. Brune Jr. also served the Maryland Historical Society and believed that joint housing would save the old library.

The city's social elite had formed the Library Company of Baltimore in 1796 after a lively exchange in the *Baltimore Daily Repository* taunted the city's self-conscious leaders. The new subscription library held dozens of volumes of classics, history, and literature and maintained a solid reputation into the 1830s when the group once again faced financial problems. Coupled with a rigid elitist stance,



Robert Cary Long, "Plan for the Athenaeum," 1846. (Maryland Historical Society.)





the lack of funds crippled the once prosperous and respected institution. The chance to move to the Athenaeum with the historical society offered the Library Company a new opportunity to prosper.³⁷

The new committee planned a grand home for Baltimore's cultural institutions, including space for an art gallery, a change the state legislature approved in December 1844. Robert Cary Long designed an impressive four-story "Italian palazzo" building with intricate classical detail such as cornices with "cantilevers and dentils." Most importantly for the preservation-minded historical society, it included fireproof closets.³⁸

Officers then drafted a unique way of financing the venture and called on the citizens of Baltimore for \$25,000 to support construction of the building. In exchange they offered "abundant remuneration in the appreciable good flowing from such institutions . . . and diffusing their genial influence over the public mind." Their solicitation ended with the admonition that Baltimore "should blush" for remaining the only major eastern city without a "temple for . . . literature and science." The idea of public support for private building projects did not begin with this Athenaeum project. Years earlier, the Maryland legislature had granted the Library Company of Baltimore permission to "raise by lottery" the sum of \$30,000 for a new building, the first Athenaeum, on Washington Square. The Panic of 1819 forced the company to postpone its plans for several years. The company's rooms, built in 1824, burned down in 1835, destroying most of its holdings. The historical society's Athenaeum subscription campaign drew 183 donors who gave a total of \$30, 575. In the company of the same page of the same page

The society's officers pledged not to begin the project until they had secured

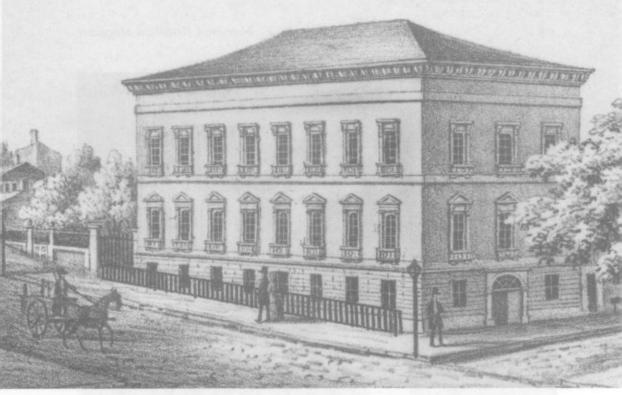
the funding. The money came in quickly, and in 1845 the society purchased the lot on the southwest corner of St. Paul and Saratoga Streets. Unfortunately, by the time the structure rose to completion in 1848, the cost had almost doubled. The society's officers and members nevertheless held firm to their public promise not to move in until the project was debt free.⁴²

The new building was still deeply in debt and six months from completion when in December 1847 society corresponding secretary James Morrison Harris replied to Library Company president Charles J. M. Eaton's note that the Mercantile Library Association requested accommodations in the Athenaeum. The joint committee agreed to lease the rooms at a "nominal rent" with the codicil that all three organizations would share building maintenance. The Mercantile's addition marks a striking and important change in society philosophy—expanding their realm beyond the elite—a move driven solely by financial need. The Mercantile offered to raise the balance due on the building in exchange for a permanent lease, and the society's own James Morrison Harris negotiated the deal. Whether Harris, as a member of both organizations, initiated the plan is unknown.

Harris's name appeared as a Mercantile founder in 1839 when he worked as a bank clerk after ill health forced him out of college. In 1841, attorney David Stewart asked Harris to study law in his offices, and the young man had established himself as a popular lawyer in the port city by the time the historical society organized in 1844. The young lawyer maintained his Mercantile membership throughout his life and was a frequent speaker in the association's lecture series. His determined voice in 1847 echoed an address he had delivered on behalf of the merchant clerks eight years earlier, when he announced the company's founding. "We . . . the merchant clerks . . . sensitive that as a class our facilities for obtaining information are very limited . . . [have] established a library" 46

The minutes of the 1847 meeting with the historical society are unusually scant. Secretary Streeter's handwriting looks a bit cramped when compared to his usually flowing script. Harris made his proposal, and the society resolved that the Mercantile adopt the most efficient means of raising as large an amount as possible. If the Mercantile went out of business, the rooms would revert to the historical society. Harris replied that in exchange for their help the Mercantile wanted a permanent lease at a nominal rent and urged the society to act quickly with the Library Company. Within two days, the *Baltimore American* carried notices that the Mercantile would be moving to the new building in June.⁴⁷ The society honored its pledge, and plans went on for the opening. In the last week of May 1848 wagons loaded with the boxes, barrels, and crates of Maryland history clattered across the city's streets to the Athenaeum.

The Maryland Historical Society dedicated the Athenaeum on October 23, 1848, and invited the public to an art exhibition. Brantz Mayer began his address

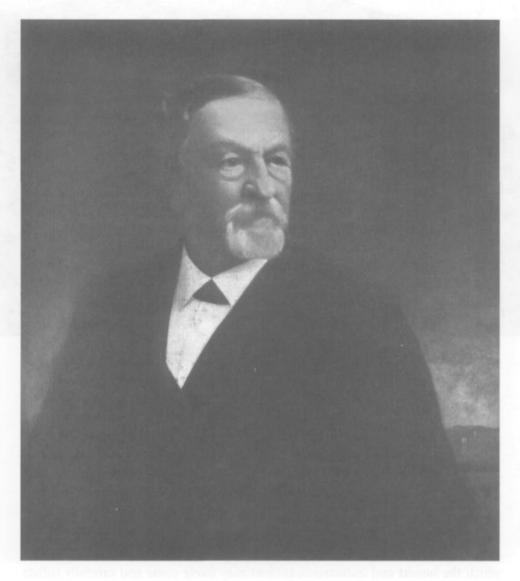


The Athenaeum, home of the Maryland Historical Society, 1848–1919. (Maryland Historical Society.)

by thanking the audience for their generous support of the project, then launched into rousing oratory, praising history as the "Recording Angel" who presides over great men and events. He elevated historians to the level of the great prophets whose work directs human destiny. Mayer cautioned his listeners against pursuing scholarship as a vocation and advised a well-rounded life of commerce with scholarship "never more than a graceful handmaiden." He spoke eloquently for historical societies and their role in the young nation. "It is precisely for the purpose of preserving . . . details of incident, character, and adventure, that Historical Societies are chiefly useful," he declared. "They become receptacles of fact, into which the honest and industrious student may freely come and carefully collate the discordant materials that have been accumulated, with commendable industry, for future use." 49

The Question of the Art Gallery

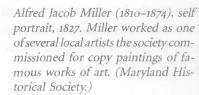
Mayer also stood as one of the founders who enthusiastically supported an art gallery in the Athenaeum, "for the improvement of the taste of the public in regard to Art, as well as the occupation and amusement of its idle hours," and proudly linked the work of the historical society and literature with "the Fine Arts as a kindred pursuit." Other patrons of the arts included Severn Teackle Wallis, John H. B. Latrobe, and Robert Gilmor. John Pendleton Kennedy had long championed "a free public library, a museum and a school of art, and provision in way of



John H. B. Latrobe (1803–1891), attorney, inventor, and MdHS founder. (Maryland Historical Society.)

lectures." Those members who supported the addition of the art gallery saw it as a means of filling the void Rembrandt Peale left when he turned over his Gallery of Fine Arts on Holliday Street to his brother and moved to Philadelphia. More urgently, after fire destroyed the first Athenaeum in 1835, Baltimore had no gallery of fine art at the time the Maryland Historical Society and the Library Company of Baltimore planned their new home.⁵⁰

At the end of the first year in the Athenaeum, the committees submitted their reports. The Committee on the Gallery, John H. B. Latrobe, B. C. Ward, and William McKim assessed their first exhibition, a display of borrowed works. They





agreed it had gone well and that in the future they would accept only "works of merit" lest the society's rooms be reduced to the "level of auction mart." On the question of how to make the best use of the cash receipts, and after much deliberation, the committee proposed to obtain copies of the best works of "each of the great masters, so that the Gallery of the Historical Society should ultimately present to the eye, a history of painting, while the shelves of its library contained the written word of the past, and passing events." The committee reassured the membership that they would not lease the room to any outside factor between exhibits lest it land on "equal footing with other rooms of the City, where dances and sermons and shows are made to alternate, with a view toward pecuniary profit."

Not all members of the historical society agreed they should house an art gallery. Although Latrobe did appreciate and support art in Baltimore, he had deep reservations about adding a gallery of fine art to the historical society. As a member of the first Committee on the Gallery, he worried that the pictures on the walls could easily distract the members from the pursuit of history:

The functions of the Society, in regard to art, are, as it may be said, rather accidental than otherwise: and it is desirable that the Gallery should be kept in its subordinate relations: that it should not swallow up the Historical Society: that the interest of it should not detract from the interest of the Library: that the members of the Society should not be drawn from their seats, at the stated meetings, to lounge among the pictures in the adjacent room. Say what we will, it is pleasant to look at works of art, even when memories of the past are calling us away from them, as eloquence and research offer them for our consideration—and there is, at all events, some

little danger that, if not guarded against, the Historical Society may be swallowed up in the Gallery, if [members attend] as much to see "how the pictures come on," as to hear addresses or essays, or enter into historical disquisitions. Should this be so, the Gallery will have been a misfortune. . . . [The situation] can best be averted by keeping the Gallery in its subordinate position . . . and keeping in view, prominently, the fact that the Historical Society belongs to the class of institutions whose noble usefulness has been illustrated by the labors of Gallatin, Prescott, Bancroft, Wheaton, and others, of the distinguished men of our country. 52

So cautioned, the Committee on the Gallery took member-sanctioned control of the gallery space, the first historical society in the United States to take on this role. Succeeding annual reports show that the yearly exhibitions consistently drew large crowds and remained popular for decades. The society's publications list, 1848–1907, included seventeen exhibition catalogs.⁵³

"A Foundation Prudently Laid"

Settled in their new home at the Athenaeum, the members of the Maryland Historical Society created, within the realm of their historical work, a gentleman's club where they opened a chess room, read the daily newspapers in the periodicals room, and gathered for monthly soirees. The officers extended "every comfort" to those members who saw the society as a "resort." The decade of the 1850s saw an increase in the number of members, from 250 to 301 in 1854, and donations that included an eleven-volume index of Maryland records in the London Public Record Office that George Peabody had commissioned. Visitors patronized the art exhibitions in higher numbers, and the admission fee collected at the door went toward purchasing more copy paintings. The "Gallery of Fine Arts continues to flourish," the society's collection of paintings and statuary grew steadily through the years, and donations came through a variety of people. Additionally, the society continued publishing addresses with "income on a small sum, raised by subscription, which is now accumulating and set apart expressly for publications." **Society** Society** So

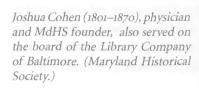
The future of the society and its continued growth hinged on establishing and maintaining the endowment fund, in place by May 1854. When John Spear Smith gave his annual address that same year, he noted a surplus in the treasury—a result of the endowment that would provide for "every appropriate expenditure . . . the surplus and its increase to meet unforeseen contingencies." The fund, he said, must be "sacredly applied to the nurture of learning and art, as well as to the conservation of the muniments of history." Smith then reiterated the guidelines for the endowment fund:

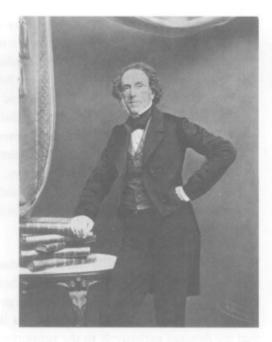
To protect ourselves from . . . calamity . . . all that it requires is a proper economy, with the active support of the members, and due diligence on the part of the committee: 1. All surpluses which may remain, after defraying the annual costs, shall be deposited in the Savings Bank. 2. Prior to the annual meeting of each year . . . the President and other officers . . . Library Committee and the Council of Government shall deliver their requisitions (to the Treasurer) . . . no other than said appropriations shall be paid, unless on subsequent and distinct vote of the Society. 3. That each member be urged to collect a sum of not less than five dollars . . . for the endowment fund. 4. The Treasurer . . . shall register the names and donations . . . 5. A Finance Committee shall be annually chosen . . . to make permanent investments of said deposits." 56

Smith then clarified that the organization did not bear the cost of the annual dinners and monthly soirees. These gatherings "[are] paid by only those who participate . . . they are in no way a charge on the general fund of the treasury. And, in like manner, the Gallery sustains itself, and draws nothing from means that are devoted exclusively to the support of the institution in its more appropriate functions. . . . A foundation has been prudently laid to secure its future from casualty or decadence." ⁵⁷

One Less Partner

The mid-1850s also saw institutional changes, both within and outside the society. The Library Company of Baltimore enjoyed a brief revival after the move to the Athenaeum, and its treasurer's reports noted that for the first time in twenty years the company carried no debt. That short-lived relief lasted just three years, for in May 1854, Joshua Cohen chaired a general meeting of the stockholders at which they "approved the union of this company with the Maryland Historical Society" on the recommendation of a joint committee of both societies. By the terms of the resolutions passed at that meeting, the library company turned over their book collections to the historical society. Members of the library company gained membership in the historical society, and the society, in turn, agreed to maintain a reading room and open the library to the public for reference use free of charge. Additionally, women and minors, denied membership in the Maryland Historical Society, gained permission to use the library for an annual fee of five dollars. On March 15, 1855, secretary J. Mason Campbell recorded the final item of business in the company's minute book. "Therefore let it be resolved that the president ... [is] authorized and empowered ... [to] execute a deed ... to the Maryland Historical Society conveying the property and collections of the company." With this final stroke of the pen the official work of the first public library in the city ended.58





By 1854 the state had transferred hundreds of colonial papers to the society, pushing the total number of document collections at the MdHS to over four hundred. That same year the society lobbied the legislature, through the services of member and Episcopal minister Ethan Allen, and asked another member, John Henry Alexander, to survey records in England and Rome pertaining to Maryland.⁵⁹ Allen and Alexander took up the task of creating a calendar of the European records and between 1859 and 1861 produced four major reports. The mid-1850s also found John Pendleton Kennedy at work on plans for George Peabody's cultural gift to the city, a public institute with a library, lecture courses, an academy of music, and an art gallery. This gift, for which the historical society would serve as administrator, shaped the society's future more than any event since its founding.

In 1856, after the Library Company closed and transferred its collections to the historical society, the Library Committee drafted *An Appeal for a Free Library*. "The library should be made free to the public, for reference under proper regulations. The whole collection, in pursuance of this provision, has been thrown open, without charge, to all readers who desire to consult the books in the rooms of the Institution." The appeal, for twenty thousand dollars, would serve as a "proper foundation," like that of the Boston Athenaeum, securely invested and the income "devoted to the purchase of books and support of the library."

As the decade closed, the members of the Maryland Historical Society could sincerely claim that their institution had succeeded. The numbers of books, manuscripts, and items in the cabinets had increased at a steady rate, and the society

had published members' papers and exchanged them with historical societies throughout the country. Upwards of two thousand visitors per year came through the Gallery of Fine Art, the first historical society art gallery in the country and undeniably the society's most popular attraction. The gallery, per its mission to present great art to the city, opened its doors to anyone who could pay the admission fee. Additionally, officers and members found security in the knowledge that the society operated free of debt, a cornerstone of expansion planning and a fiscal mandate that the institution maintained until the move to Monument Street in 1919.

Yet the Maryland Historical Society and its founders enjoyed little more than a decade of growth and prosperity. By the end of the 1850s, sectional tensions had escalated to a critical intersection. Maryland's border state population divided on slavery and sectional questions and the men who had collegially worked toward cultural solidarity took passionate stands on either side of the nation's conflict. Loyal friendships ended in bitterness. The society, whose membership reflected state political and cultural divisions, barely survived the war.

The Friday Club, c. 1855. Three of the society's twenty-two founders [*] belonged to this lawyer's social club. Upper row, left to right, Benjamin C. Preston, George Brown,* Charles M. Pitts, Thomas Donaldson, and Frederick W. Brune, Bottom row, left to right, Henry Winter Davis, Severn Teakle Wallis,* William F. Frick, George W. Dobbin, William A. Talbot,* William Henry Norris, and William H. G. Dorsev. (Maryland Historical Society.)



Notes

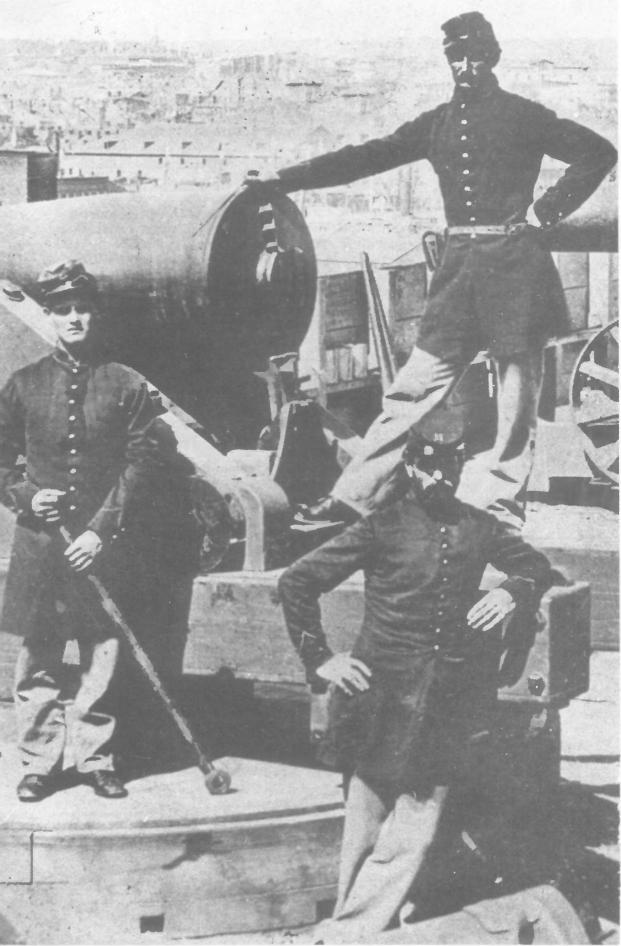
- 1. Robert J. Brugger, Maryland A Middle Temperament 1634—1980 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 84—132; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (1881, reprint Baltimore: Tradition Press, 1971), 47—81; Sherry H. Olsen, Baltimore The Building of an American City (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980),10—70; Mary Ellen Hayward, "The Mercantile Community of Baltimore, From Town to City," Classical Maryland 1815—1845 Fine and Decorative Arts from the Golden Age (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1993), 1—21.
- 2. Ibid. For a history of Baltimore's African American community see Christopher Phillips, Freedom's Port: Baltimore's African American Community 1790–1860 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).
- 3. These diverse religious groups lived in ethnic neighborhoods. Poorer immigrants lived in the Fells Point area of the city. Tensions toward Catholics rose in the 1830s and with the surge in immigration in the late 1840s. For Baltimore's Catholics see, for example, Thomas W. Spalding, *The Premier See: A History of the Archdiocese of Baltimore*, 1789–1989 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).
- 4. Raphael Semmes, "Baltimore During the Time of the Old Peale Museum," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 27 (1932): 115–22 (hereinafter *MdHM*); Robert Gilmore, "Recollections of Baltimore," *MdHM*, 7 (1912): 233–42.
- 5. John Pendleton Kennedy, "Baltimore Long Ago," in *Our Country* (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1864).
- 6. Baltimore's strong economy before 1830 drew African Americans from other states who found job opportunities in this border state city. The free black population rose to 27,000 (ninety percent free) by 1840. The economic downturn of 1837 and the increased fear of the black community in the wake of the Nat Turner rebellion fueled racial violence. Phillips, *Freedom's Port*.
- 7. Joseph W. Cox, "The Origins of the Maryland Historical Society: A Case Study in Cultural Philanthropy," *MdHM*, 74 (1979): 114.
- 8. Classical Maryland, 11–20; from notes taken from the Classical Maryland exhibit at the Maryland Historical Society, 1993. The search for culture with a national character began in the eighteenth century and escalated after the Revolution and American victory in the War of 1812. These events coincided with European interest in the ancient civilizations after scientists unearthed the remains of Pompeii and after Napoleon conquered Italy and Egypt. Americans wove classical thought, ideals, and designs into their daily lives.
- 9. John Earle Uhler, "The Delphian Club," MdHM, 20 (1925): 305-46.
- 10. Library Company of Baltimore Papers, MS.80, Manuscripts Division of the Maryland Historical Society (hereinafter cited LCOB Papers). The Library Company catalogs list dozens of Italian and Greek design books "with plates."
- 11. John Higham, "The Ethnic Historical Society in Changing Times," *Journal of Ethnic History*, 13 (Winter 1994): 31.
- 12. John Higham, From Boundlessness to Consolidation: The Transformation of American Culture 1848–1860 (Ann Arbor: William J. Clements Library, 1969), 14; Michael Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 35–50.
- 13. Bernard C. Steiner, "Dedication of the H. Irvine Keyser Memorial Building," *MdHM*, 14 (1919): 13; Kevin B. Sheets, "Saving History: The Maryland Historical Society and Its Founders," *MdHM*, 89 (1994): 134; Scharf, *History of Baltimore*, 659.

- 14. Maryland Historical Society, *Annual Report 1850*, MS 2008, Manuscripts Division Maryland Historical Society Library (hereinafter cited MdHS Papers).
- 15. Minute Book, January 27, 1844, MdHS Papers.
- 16. For a history of Belknap's efforts see Louis Leonard Tucker, *The Massachusetts Historical Society: A Bicentennial History, 1791–1991* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1996).
- 17. Leslie Dunlap, American Historical Societies, 1790–1860 (Madison, Wis.: Privately printed, 1944), 10.
- 18. Cox, "Cultural Philanthropy," 107; Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies:* An Enquiry into their Research and Publications Functions and Their Financial Future (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 1962); Clifford L. Lord, *Keepers of the Past* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965).
- 19. Richard L. Cox, "A Century of Frustration: The Movement for a State Archives in Maryland, 1811–1935," *MdHM*, 78 (1983): 106–17. The Maryland Historical Society had sole custody of historic documents until the Maryland State Archives (formerly the Maryland Hall of Records) opened in 1935.
- 20. Ibid.; Charles H. Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy: Gentleman from Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 175. The society finally gained custody of Maryland's colonial records by the assembly's 1882 act, sponsored and written anonymously by Johns Hopkins University professor Herbert Baxter Adams. The act transferred the documents and included a "publications" clause that allocated state funds to publish these records as the *Archives of Maryland* series. For a full account of the Maryland State Papers Project, see Patricia Dockman Anderson, "Laying the Foundations: Herbert Baxter Adams, John Thomas Scharf, and Early Maryland Historical Scholarship," *MdHM*, 89 (1994): 170–83.
- 21. Membership circular, MdHS Papers, Box 43; Sheets, "Saving History," 133–55.
- 22. Minute Book, March 1, 1844, MdHS Papers.
- 23. Ibid., May 9, 1844, MdHS Papers.
- 24. lbid., February 6, 1845, MdHS Papers.
- 25. Ibid.
- 26. J. Cox, "Cultural Philanthropy," 103. The Delphians gathered as the first "class of professional writers in Baltimore." See John Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (1881; repr. Baltimore: Tradition Press, 1971), 612. MdHS members who belonged to the Delphians included John H. B. Latrobe, John Pendleton Kennedy, Brantz Mayer, Robert Gilmor, Robert Carey Long, and John Spear Smith. See Patricia Dockman Anderson, "The Cultivation of the Mind': The Library Company of Baltimore, 1796–1855," unpublished paper, Towson University, 1993, in possession of the author.
- 27. MdHS Pre-Fund Publications, MdHS library (rare books); the unpublished essays dealt mainly with Indian topics and coats-of-arms. The collection is bound and catalogued as the Pre-Fund Publications to distinguish them from the Fund Publication program that began after George Peabody donated \$20,000, one-half specifically for publications, in 1867.
- 28. The sixty-five historical societies established in the United States prior to the Civil War published more than five hundred works. Ten societies issued three-fourths of them. The Maryland society, as did Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, and the American Antiquarian Society, together published more titles than the other sixty organizations combined. See Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies*, 156.
- 29. John H. B. Latrobe, Esq., *Memoir of Benjamin Banneker*, MdHS Pre-Fund Publications (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1845). Latrobe, who served as president of the Maryland Colonization Society for many years, first published this paper as an article in the

Maryland Colonization Society Journal, 23 (May 1845): 353–64. For a full account of colonization activity in Maryland, see Richard L. Hall, On Afric's Shore: A History of Maryland in Liberia, 1834–1857 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2003). For recent scholarship on Banneker (and his mixed race heritage), see Silvio A. Bedini, The Life of Benjamin Banneker: First African-American Man of Science, revised edition (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1998). 30. Moses Sheppard, African Slave Trade in Jamaica, MdHS Pre-Fund Publications (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1854).

- 31. John Pendleton Kennedy, *The Life and Character of George Calvert, First Lord Baltimore*, MdHS Pre-Fund Publications (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1845), 23–24.
- 32. Ibid., 43.
- 33. Bernard Campbell, "Discourse on the Life and Character of George Calvert, the First Lord Baltimore: made by John P. Kennedy, before the Maryland Historical Society, being the second annual address to that association," *The United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review*, 5 (1846): 194–220. Kennedy's sources included "Maryland Papers in the Office of the Plantations, London," Chalmer's *History of the American Revolt*, manuscript collections, and Maryland proprietary records. Campbell also used these records and supplemented them with writings by John Leeds Bozman, John V. L. McMahon, and George Bancroft.
- 34. "Remarks of the United States Catholic Magazine on the Discussion between the Hon. J. P. Kennedy and His Reviewer," *The United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review*, 5 (1846): 376–83. Recent Maryland scholarship finds Calvert attracted by the "allure of riches" and that he did convert to Catholicism shortly before the Maryland expedition in 1633 (Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 4). For current scholarship on the Calverts, see John D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
- 35. Membership Circular, MdHS Papers.
- 36. Minute Book, February 6 and March 4, 1845, and "Plan for the Athenaeum," MdHS Papers. Trustees of the Athenaeum were Robert Gilmor, Benjamin C. Ward, Johns Hopkins, Samuel W. Smith, James McHenry Boyd, George W. Dobbin, John Spear Smith, Brantz Mayer, Osmond C. Tiffany, Charles James Madison Eaton, and Chauncey Brooks. *Laws of Maryland*, December Session 1845, Chapter 122. The Athenaeum, for as long as it served these institutions, operated "exempt... from taxation and public assessment." Ibid., Section 6. The founders named the new building the "Athenaeum" after the Roman Athenaeum, an academy of law and literature built in honor of Athena, the Roman goddess of wisdom.
- 37. Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 371; Stewart C. Sherman, "The Library Company of Baltimore," *MdHM*, 39 (1944): 6–24.
- 38. "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland, that the Maryland Historical Society be, and it hereby is authorized and empowered to establish and maintain a Gallery of Fine Arts, and also to establish or cause to be delivered public lectures on the fine arts, or on literary or on scientific subjects," *Laws of Maryland*, December Session, 1844, Chapter 198, "A Supplement to an act entitled an act to Incorporate the Maryland Historical Society"; "Description of the Athenaeum, prepared by the architect," MdHS Papers.
- 39. Ibid.
- 40. Anderson, "Cultivation of the Mind."
- 41. Johns Hopkins and George Peabody each gave \$500, John McDonogh \$350, Thomas Wilson \$250, and Enoch Pratt \$150. "List of Subscribers to the Athenaeum," MdHS Papers. the first Atheneaum, on Washington Square,
- 42. "Plan of the Athenaeum," MdHS Papers.
- 43. Corresponding Secretary's letter book, MdHS Papers.

- 44. Charter and Constitution, Mercantile Papers; Minute Book, December 9, 1847, MdHS Papers.
- 45. Mercantile Library Papers; biographical information from the society's vertical files.
- 46. Constitution, Mercantile Library Papers.
- 47. Scrapbook, Mercantile Papers. The group met at the Indian Queen Hotel, Baltimore and Hanover Streets.
- 48. Brantz Mayer, *Commerce, Literature, and Art,* MdHS Pre-Fund Publication (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1848), 19.
- 49. Ibid., 27-28.
- 50. Brantz Mayer, *History, Possessions, and Prospects of the Maryland Historical Society,* Fund Publication No. 1 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1867), 13–14; John Pendleton Kennedy Papers, Diary, 1841 (hereinafter cited Kennedy Papers). The original Kennedy papers are in the Archives of the Peabody Institute, Baltimore. Henry T. Tuckerman, *The Life of John Pendleton Kennedy* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1871), 390; Latrobe Weston, "Art and Artists in Baltimore," *MdHM*, 33 (1938): 218–19. For the 1835 fire that destroyed the first Athenaeum, see Scharf, *History of Baltimore*, 261. The museum remained in the care of Rubens Peale for several years, on its original site. The facility moved to new quarters at Calvert and Baltimore Streets in 1829.
- 51. These paintings, termed "gallery pictures," should not be confused with gallery exhibits that historical societies developed in the age of photography during the last half of the nineteenth century and which continue to the present. Extracts from the First Annual Report of the Committee on the Gallery, Read to the Society, 1849 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1849), 8–9.
- 52. Ibid., 11-12.
- 53. The society hosted art exhibitions until the early years of the twentieth century, when the Walters Art Gallery and the Baltimore Museum of Art took up this function. Anna Wells Rutledge, "Early Art Exhibitions of the Maryland Historical Society," *MdHM*, 42 (1947), 126–28. For art galleries and historical societies, see Dunlap, *Historical Societies*, 73–74.
- 54. Dunlop, Historical Societies, 90.
- 55. Report of the President of the Maryland Historical Society, at the Annual Meeting in May, 1854 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1854), 5, 7. For a list of donors, acquisitions, and a register of visitors, see gallery records, boxes 58, 84, 88, MdHS Papers.
- 56. Report of the President of the Maryland Historical Society, at the Annual Meeting in May, 1854 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1854), 3–4. Smith's order of priorities indicates the popularity of the gallery and prompts recollection of Latrobe's earlier caution.
- 57. Ibid., 7-8.
- 58. Minute Book, March 15, 1855, LCOB Papers. Many of the pages in the minute books are unnumbered; all citations in this work are to the date of the entry.
- 59. Richard Cox, "Century of Frustration," 108. The same year a legislative committee, with no apparent urging from the society, complained that state records were "carelessly crowded into insufficient cases... it is next to impossible to find any paper connected with the previous sessions." The legislature authorized funding for a small fireproof building, completed in 1858. 60. An Appeal for the Establishment of a Free Library in the City of Baltimore (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1856), 4, 9. The Library Committee drafted the appeal and members of the society endorsed it, including J. P. Kennedy and his brother Anthony, Johns Hopkins, Enoch Pratt, Moses Sheppard, and William McKim, most of whom later founded or contributed to philanthropic institutions and beneficial organizations. Enoch Pratt bequeathed the money for the city's free library in 1886.



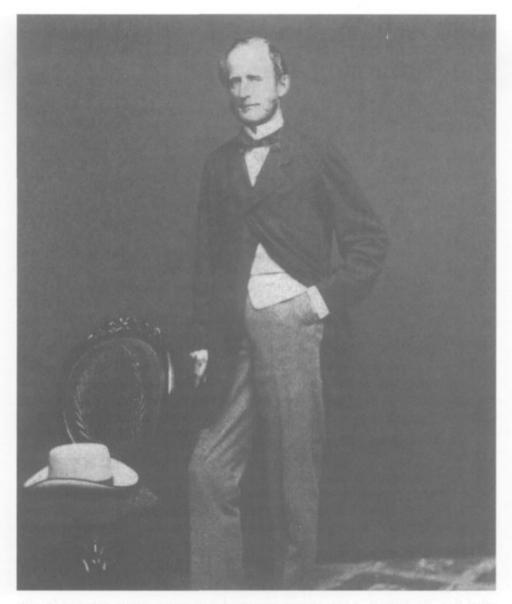
After the War: Embracing the Future and Commemorating the Past

utside the Athenaeum's walls, the nation edged toward war. Issues such as slavery and state supremacy, left unsettled at the Constitutional Convention, defied repeated attempts at compromise. As those issues grew more heated, Maryland, on the border between North and South with societal and cultural ties to both, found itself in a precarious position. By 1860, Baltimore housed the largest free black population in the country, 25,000, and the federal census counted almost equal numbers of free and enslaved blacks in the state. Visitors found a curious mix of "Yankee go-aheadism and cavalier leisure." Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore boasted a Southern heritage complete with grand plantations, a staple crop economy, and large numbers of slaves. The central and western parts of the state reflected a decidedly northern influence in a population made up primarily of farmers, shopkeepers, and craftsmen, yet sympathy for the South was far from unknown there.

Following the attack on Fort Sumter and President Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion, many in Baltimore feared what might happen if more federal troops moved through the city. Governor Thomas Holliday Hicks delivered a plea for calm on April 18, 1861, and the following day, when the 6th Massachusetts volunteers disembarked at President Street station and marched across Pratt Street toward Camden station, bound for Washington D.C., a riot broke out that left four soldiers and twelve civilians dead in the streets—the first major bloodshed of the Civil War.²

More Massachusetts volunteers landed at Annapolis the following week and moved to Baltimore's Federal Hill under cover of darkness on the night of May 13. Residents awoke to find their city under martial law. Union soldiers seized supplies bound for the Confederate states, closed shops operated by suspected Southern sympathizers, forbade unauthorized assemblies, and outlawed the use of the rebel flag. By August, 4,600 troops occupied Baltimore, many camped in city parks, and by year's end the police commissioner and key city officials found themselves in prison at Fort McHenry. Federal authorities also incarcerated prosecession legislators and sent some to out-of-state military prisons.³

The tensions that split the country almost destroyed the Maryland Historical Society, as longtime friendships were "torn asunder by the divided loyalties of the war." For example, Severn Teackle Wallis, attorney, Whig legislator turned Demo-



Severn Teakle Wallis (1816–1894), lawyer, state legislator, MdHS founder, prisoner of war, 1861–1862. (Maryland Historical Society.)

crat, and a chief "exponent of the state's views and champion of its privileges," wrote a passionate tract on the federal government's usurpation of powers. Union soldiers in Frederick burned thirty thousand copies of it, and in September 1861, General John A. Dix, federal commander in Baltimore, ordered Wallis arrested and sent to Fortress Monroe, Virginia. He was then transferred to Fort Lafayette in New York harbor and ultimately to Fort Warren in Boston harbor, where he remained until 1862. Physically debilitated for the rest of his life, Wallis returned

George William Brown (1812–1890), lawyer, MdHS founder, mayor of Baltimore in 1861, and prisoner of war. Brown opened his account of the Pratt Street riot with this eloquent and personal note: "... it is not pleasant to disturb the ashes of a great conflagration, which, although they have grown cold on the surface, cover embers still capable of emitting both smoke and heat; and especially it is not pleasant when the disturber of the ashes was himself an actor in the scenes which he is asked to describe." (Maryland Historical Society.)



home to Baltimore to work in Maryland politics, and for the Maryland Historical Society, until his death as its president, in 1894.⁵ Federal authorities also arrested George William Brown, then mayor of Baltimore, and held him at Fort McHenry before ultimately sending him to Fort Warren as well.⁶

Union men among the society's leaders included New Hampshire-born Sebastian F. Streeter, a "leading member of the Union Party and president of the Union Relief Association," and Brantz Mayer who accepted a commission in the U.S. Army as paymaster and traveled, as such, to Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana. Another prominent Baltimorean and historical society leader, John Pendleton Kennedy, took up the cause for the union. Like many of his peers Kennedy, formerly a Whig congressman and Millard Filmore's secretary of the navy, had seen military service in earlier conflicts and battled his own poor health as sectional tensions drove the country toward war. The elder statesman formulated ideas for the new Constitutional Union Party, declined the invitation to run as its presidential nominee, and became the spokesman for the border as those states struggled during the secession winter of 1860–61.

While political efforts to reach a compromise collapsed, Kennedy worked to keep Maryland from following Virginia into the Confederacy, and when the war dragged on, he appealed to the gentlemen of the South for an end to the conflict through letters he wrote for the *National Intelligencer* under the name of Paul Ambrose. Kennedy's private journal and letters to friends record a degree of resentment and ostracism not found in the surviving papers of the other founders. His position, as a grandson of the wealthy, landed, slaveholding Pendleton family



Brantz Mayer guided the society past the crisis of the Civil War after John Spear Smith's death in 1866. (Maryland Historical Society.)

of Virginia, carried with it expectations of loyalty to the Confederacy, from his family and undoubtedly from his like-minded peers.⁸ Other members were also caught up in the conflict, and at times no more than ten or twelve attended meetings during the war years.⁹

The thousands of Marylanders who had served in the army and navy on both sides made their way home from the war to a state far different from the one they had left. Slavery had ended in Maryland on November 1, 1864, per the new state constitution, yet Eastern Shore planters perpetuated a system of involuntary labor for decades by indenturing black children. The new constitution also stipulated that Marylanders who had given "aid or comfort" to the enemy could not hold office. The state's Democrats soon called for another convention and regained control of state politics in 1867. Thousands of people, white and black, came to Baltimore, the only major southern city not destroyed by the war, one that in many ways had prospered during it and in which opportunity now thrived. Furnishing merchants sent household goods south on Baltimore trains. Jobs opened in canning, household items, textile production and in the construction

industry, which produced an estimated thirty-five hundred houses a year until the boom peaked in 1872.¹⁰

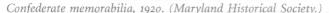
Those members of the Maryland Historical Society who survived the conflict returned to the business of history much diminished in number and mourning the death of their first and only president, John Spear Smith, who had been unanimously elected to the chair each year of the society's twenty-two-year life. The decrease in the number of members was not unique to Maryland. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania spent the war years in a "state of desuetudinous languor," one that reached an unfortunate nadir when the only person to attend the May and June 1860 meetings was the librarian. Preoccupation with the national crisis and under the leadership of an "ineffective and disinterested" president, the Pennsylvania society did not rebound for years.11 The Virginia Historical Society had suffered near total destruction, having lent their pre-war endowment fund to the Confederate government by investing in city and state bonds. Members moved collections and shifted space to accommodate the expanded staff of the war effort and then lost just about everything in the great fire that swept through Richmond in April 1865. The society, reduced primarily to the widows and children of their former members, lay inactive for several years until, in a gesture of good will, the Massachusetts Historical Society sent them the original manuscript of a narrative of Bacon's Rebellion. Other donations followed, and the society resumed its regular meetings in 1870.12

Back to the Business of History

In his 1867 inaugural address, new president and founder Brantz Mayer welcomed the future and attributed the drop in members and activity through the war years to men who "had been more engaged in making history than in recording it." ¹³ In Mayer, the membership had selected the man who had first envisioned their organization, and who now pledged, in honor of their former leader, to "strive to . . . catch his honest zeal for your service as well as the bland manner with which he led or controlled your discussions." Mayer clearly sought to bring the membership back to the business of history, and there was an optimistic urgency in his message. "Now that peace has come, while cultivating renewed union and fellowship, all should strive to illustrate the period by gathering and preserving those publications" of the war years. The job at hand, Mayer told the members, was to gather as quickly as possible all of the surviving documents of the war—pamphlets, handbills, broadsides, narratives, memoirs, complaints, controversies, newspapers, biographies, and histories. These "should be gathered, classified, bound, indexed, and placed in a separate department of our library," for they constituted "the first outlines of history divulging its secrets undisguised, they are the expression of living impulses of the hour, reliable, because they are warm from the eager and striving brain." Russell Bartlett, of the Rhode Island Historical Society, had already published *Literature of the Rebellion*, a catalog of more than 6,000 titles.

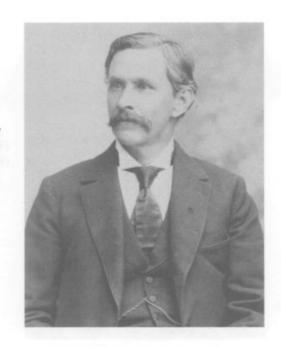
Mayer also sought a return to the activities that had provided intellectual stimulation and placed the society in the realm of current events by resuming the practice of inviting nationally known speakers to the annual meeting. Prior to the war, the society had welcomed "Toombs and Stephens of Georgia, Thompson of South Carolina, Crittenden of Kentucky, and Webster of Massachusetts . . . [who] met, at our board, on the cordial platform of indissoluble union." Mayer recalled these events as occasions that "spoke of common liberty, glory, and interest." With his focus on the future of the nation and the society, the new president offered his vision and challenged those gathered to return to the work of saving Maryland history and increasing the membership with the call for "each member . . . to add another member to our list in the coming year." ¹⁴

Despite Mayer's plans, some of which indeed materialized, old loyalties remained and directed the group's presentation of history. The Union may have won the war, but antebellum southern, aristocratic influence enhanced by Confederate nostalgia permeated the very fabric of the organization for decades and gave it new life. A telling indicator was the establishment of a "Confederate Room," stuffed with memorabilia of what was increasingly referred to as the "Lost Cause." Confederate veterans Andrew C. Trippe served on the Committee on Addressses and Entertainments, McHenry Howard oversaw membership, and Bradley T. Johnson worked with publications. The society would not open a "Union Room" for almost a century, until the nation was in the midst of celebrating the war's centennial.





Confederate veteran McHenry Howard oversaw membership. The society's officers approved all membership applications, well into the twentieth century. (Maryland Historical Society.)





"A Female Rebel in Baltimore—An Everyday Scene," is among the type of war memorabilia the society collected, Harper's Weekly, September 7, 1861. The Civil War collection now includes, for example, diaries, letters, newspapers, and uniforms. Exhibitions at the President Street Station satelite museum highlight Maryland's role in the war. (Maryland Historical Society.)

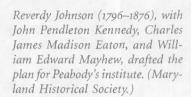


Philanthropist George Peabody, 1795–1869. (Maryland Historical Society.)

The Peabody Controversy

Another piece of post-Civil War business involved settlement of the ongoing disagreements over the management of the Peabody Institute. John Pendleton Kennedy, long a friend of George Peabody's, had often expressed his interest in improving the cultural resources of the city with "a free Public Library, a Museum, and a School of Art, and a provision in the way of lectures" with a view toward opening these venues to the "people of the city." He had the vision, but he lacked the funds. Peabody's plans to build such an institute in Baltimore brought Kennedy great satisfaction. With funding in sight, Kennedy, Charles James Madison Eaton, William Edward Mayhew, and Reverdy Johnson together drafted a prospectus and presented it to Peabody when he visited Baltimore in the winter of 1857.15 Under the plan, Peabody, also a member of the historical society, and his friends selected twenty-five trustees, including Mendes Cohen, Enoch Pratt, and William McKim, many of them members of the society. The pioneer civic philanthropist then named the Maryland Historical Society his new institute's administrator and the group voted to adopt the plan on April 1, 1858. The trustees incorporated the venture later that year.16

Plans for Peabody's cultural gift to the city included the facets of Kennedy's vision—the library, lecture courses, an academy of music, and an art gallery—and added prizes for outstanding students in Baltimore's public and private schools, including \$1,200 annually for gold medals to female high school graduates." With shared components such as the art gallery, lectures, and the library, tensions rose as the institute and the society competed for cultural dominance.





Additionally, the same tensions that nearly broke the historical society during the war years brought the trustees to an impasse over seemingly small questions such as organization. The core of the controversy is found in Peabody's instructions to the trustees. He insisted that the "institute show itself, in every emergency, the firm defender of our glorious union," a dictum that certainly fractured board unity during the unsettling and uncertain closing years of the decade. Frustrated with the seemingly constant bickering, Kennedy wanted to resign, but Peabody urged him to remain on the board.¹⁸

At war's end, George Peabody ended his institute's alliance with the historical society. In parting he presented a magnanimous gift of \$20,000 in stocks for a publication fund. The gift came with instructions that half of the income be used to print and distribute pamphlets, papers, and books.¹⁹ Ultimately, through its diverse offerings and public programs such as the Saturday morning lecture series, the Peabody Institute became "the larger cultural enterprise in post–Civil War Baltimore."²⁰

In 1867, a year after the Peabody Institute opened, Brantz Mayer wrote that the society's plans for an "endowment fund by subscription" in 1857 had not materialized as a result of the Peabody plans, also presented the same year, and the war. Mayer expressed regret that the cooperative venture with the Peabody had failed but in a gesture of conciliation said it would be "ungenerous now to restate the causes of the failure . . . improper since that large-hearted man has seen fit, in remodeling his institute, to endow this Society by the liberal, independent gift of twenty thousand dollars. . . . [a] donation ample to secure the permanence of the Maryland Historical Society." The membership had swelled in just over a year to



Athenaeum Reading Room, 1918. (Maryland Historical Society.)

three hundred members, and the officers had saved, by "rigid economy" four thousand dollars. The war and the Peabody controversy behind them, and invigorated with the promise of the future, Mayer assured the members that "with Mr. Peabody's gift . . . the society we had so long cherished was, at last and forever, beyond the reach of vicissitude."²¹

A Mission in Motion

One significant element in the intent of Peabody's gift lay in the fact that his institute did not plan to publish books and pamphlets and therefore did not present a conflict of interest. Despite the similarity in the organizations' missions in matters of art and lectures, the groups addressed different cultural interests. For the historical society, amassing artifacts and books and publishing and distributing Maryland history remained a priority in the decades following the war. Peabody's gift gave the enterprise a fiscal foundation and secured this mandate. The number of published papers and tracts had grown to "fill three octavo volumes and have been so much sought for in a collected shape that complete sets were lately sold in the north for forty dollars" and some titles were out of print.

The "complete sets" Mayer spoke of are now known as the "Pre-Fund Publications" and are cataloged as such in the historical society's library. Post-Peabody publications are cataloged and bound as the "Fund Publications." Interestingly,

the first publication supported by the new fund was Brantz Mayer's inaugural address, *History, Possessions, and Prospects*. The number of society titles grew steadily, and the increasing influence of the Gallery of Fine Arts can be seen in the number of exhibit catalogs—seventeen, from 1848 to 1907.²² In addition to the Fund Publications, the society continued to publish early state records and worked with the legislature for state funding.²³

The society adhered to the core of their original mission through the last third of the nineteenth century and continued collecting books, manuscripts, and artifacts. The library had logged an impressive collection record, 15,000 volumes in "all branches of literature," and with the exception of the Massachusetts Historical Society held the most valuable collection in the country. Increasing the holdings remained a priority, but a lack of criteria resulted in an eclectic list of titles, papers, and memorabilia. The burgeoning collections quickly filled the spacious rooms of the Athenaeum until by 1875 librarian John J. Jacobsen reported that the library needed additional shelves.²⁴

Members continued to research and write their papers and present them at monthly meetings, yet not all complied with this requirement, and Mayer had to repeatedly remind his colleagues of their duty. "Each . . . will pledge himself to read, consecutively, an historical paper, at each of the monthly meetings between October 1867 and June 1868." The secretary sent meeting notices at the beginning of the "season" in order to attract more attendees. Mayer boldly proposed allowing women into the heretofore male domain. "I think it would not be an unwelcome innovation, if, at a certain hour of each evening, and after the ordinary business shall have been transacted, we hereafter admit ladies to partake with us the pleasure and instruction of these lectures" Nevertheless, as in so many other areas of public life, such as higher education, interested nineteenth-century Maryland women could not hold formal membership in the society.

It would be inaccurate to claim that inclusion of the Gallery of Fine Art was part of the original mission as the founders did not include it in their 1843 planning meetings, in their 1844 charter, or in the initial call for members. It should be noted, however, that by the end of the first year these same men had amended the first constitution to include this attraction. Among the founders who promoted the gallery, Robert Gilmor, "a munificent patron of the arts with the taste and acquirements of an accomplished gentleman," had acquired a renowned collection of fine art.²⁶ As stated earlier, the gallery proved to be the society's most popular attraction and one that Mayer wanted to restart when he took the chair in 1867. The society had not featured an "exhibition of pictures and statuary . . . since fall of 1858."

The number of artworks in the collections increased, as did those in the library. In addition to paying for copies of internationally recognized Italian and Greek paintings, members solicited Maryland households for pieces they deemed



Herbert Baxter Adams (1850–1901), first professor of history at the Johns Hopkins University. (Maryland Historical Society.)

valuable. For example, in November 1865, Reverend Ethan Allen visited Mount Airey, family seat of the Calvert descendents, where he saw portraits of "Charles, Lord Baltimore, and his two successors, as well as of Mr. Calvert and his wife, first proprietors of this estate." He brought the news to a society meeting at which time the members voted to appoint a committee to negotiate for the portraits and issued the reminder that "we should not be neglectful of Maryland portraiture."

Centennial

The nation celebrated its centennial in 1876 with festivities in towns and cities across the land. Civic leaders organized patriotic parades featuring military veterans and pageants in which actors recreated the drama of 1776. Business and community boosters touted the virtues of their municipalities. The national event, the Philadelphia Exposition, took place in Machinery Hall. Visitors, some curious, others a bit intimidated, saw demonstrations of new technological improvements: power looms, lathes, sewing machines, tool-making machines, and the awe-inspiring thirty-foot-high Corliss Double Walking Steam Engine. The Remington Arms Company showed off its amazing typewriter, an invention that guaranteed legible writing for all. Thomas Edison displayed his "multiplex telegraph," one that could send and receive multiple messages, and Alexander Graham Bell gave the first demonstration of his telephone, the greatest wonder of electrical communication.²⁸ Baltimoreans likewise celebrated the centennial, with "bunting and banners, illuminations and bell ringing," turning out in grand style for parades, boat excursions, and picnics. Across the city, flags flew from rooftops, window ledges, and railings, delighting city residents. At midnight, Big Sam,

the clock on city hall, "vigorously rang in the nation's second hundred years and the bells in the city fire halls clamored in accompaniment."²⁹

The centennial year also stands in local history as the year the new Johns Hopkins University opened in Baltimore, the first modern graduate school in the country. Among the educational guidelines was the directive that the university be situated in an area where students and faculty could have access to the city's libraries and institutions. The university's first home, on Howard Street, two blocks south of where Maryland General Hospital stands today, accommodated a handful of students. Founded on the European seminar system with studies based on original research, Hopkins's faculty took students to local institutions, among them the Maryland Historical Society. Within the first few years the university announced classes "for practical training in the use of colonial laws, archives, and the documentary history of the older states of the American union. The classes will meet in the library of the Maryland Historical Society." 30

This cordial alliance allowed university students the use of the library and collections and in turn, Hopkins men read their papers at the monthly meetings. The historical society gained a new base of support and the university a forum for its research. Herbert Baxter Adams, first professor of history, whose students needed the "specimens" of the past for their "scientific investigations," became an advocate for record preservation and free public access to state documents. Librarian John W. M. Lee reported to the Library Committee that university students used the society's collections and noted that university president Daniel Coit Gilman had expressed his thanks for the society's "generosity to . . . students and open access to them of its collections."³¹



Baltimore's Sesquicentennial celebration, 1880. (Maryland Historical Society.)

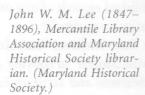
Four years later, in 1880, as the city planned its sesquicentennial salute, the leaders of the Maryland Historical Society did not join the larger civic festivities but instead held their own exercises with a subscription banquet at the Academy of Music. This elitism, a source of strength in terms of leadership and funding, is also an example of how a private society sometimes "loses touch with the collective population for whom it speaks."³² The group had initially planned an outdoor celebration but did not include the interests of the broader population. German Americans, first called on to provide the music, took over the event when the society backed out and organized an extravagant parade of fifty-nine associations with a "number of Prominent Americans." The six-day celebration featured Baltimore & Ohio Railroad heir Robert Garrett's "dazzling" exhibition of the city's industrial rise, presented in part to improve the company's image after the deadly railroad workers' strike in 1877.³³

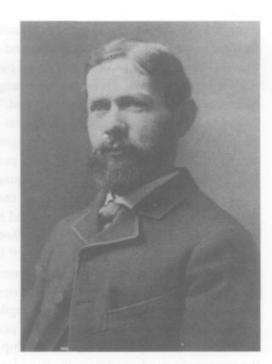
The Hopkins alliance boosted the historical society's reputation and earned it good and faithful friends in the late nineteenth-century cultural and academic community, yet the organization remained stubbornly devoted to the state's colonial past and the inherited lore of its predominately white gentry. The cost of this single-mindedness proved to be high. The Baltimore-based Maryland society, like many others on the eastern seaboard, failed to gain the public and political support that could have produced lasting benefits from the state. By contrast, societies such Nebraska and Wisconsin, formed initially as gentlemen's clubs, allied themselves with major state universities and quickly gained state support. These Midwestern groups looked beyond genealogy and historical records collecting and became deeply involved in politics and public education. They found success in popularizing history through museum exhibits, historic sites, and historical anniversaries.

The cause of their success may have been as simple as timing—most of the Midwestern societies organized at the same time the federal government set up land grant college programs.³⁴ Additionally, Maryland had a poor history of support for public education. Unlike New England, this Chesapeake settlement's government did not support public education until after the Civil War, at which time the legislature approved a school tax.³⁵ The Maryland Historical Society did find limited state support in the project that ranks as the hallmark of its achievements—the *Archives of Maryland* series—the culmination of decades of work to preserve and publish state records in order that those documents be available to anyone with an interest in Maryland history.³⁶

A Lasting Legacy

Historians of early Maryland had long called for help in arranging and preserving the remnants of the colonial past. As early as 1708, John Oldmixon noted that





no "memoirs" existed with which to write about Maryland in his history of the British Empire. Benedict Leonard Calvert also hoped to write the colony's history and called attention to the poor condition of materials in an address to the assembly in 1729. Thirty years later, Governor Horatio Sharpe reported that his aide, John Rideout, found the documents "so very deficient . . . that he imagined it would be impossible to Compile a History from the Records that are in the Province." The most complete accounts of Maryland's history, written in the eighteenth century, came from records housed in England.³⁷

Nineteenth-century scholars faced the same challenges. Historians of the Revolution, dismayed at the condition of the state's papers, called for "some judicious compiler . . . to arrange and publish" those that had survived. Jared Sparks, Peter Force, John Leeds Bozman, John V. L. McMahon, and novelist John Pendleton Kennedy all expressed frustration as they attempted to write accurately of Maryland's past. Additionally, autograph collectors maimed surviving documents in their pursuit of historic memorabilia. Society founder Robert Gilmor amassed one of the "great" autograph collections, many snipped from Maryland's papers.

Repeated attempts to collect, preserve, and publish colonial documents failed until the Maryland Historical Society successfully petitioned for their custody and published the acclaimed *Archives of Maryland* series (1883–1972). Editor William Hand Browne worked with the head of the British Public Record Office, Noel Salisbury, and compiled a virtually complete collection of the state's colonial

records. With these copies, and records transferred to Baltimore from Annapolis, the first volume came off press in 1883 and opened with an excerpt from the law that had brought the project into print, passed at the January session, 1882, "An Act to provide for the Preservation, arrangement, publication, and sale of Ancient Documents pertaining to Maryland." Twentieth-century historians continued to applaud the work and noted that Maryland "was the first of the southern states to launch a comprehensive program for the printing of its official colonial records. . . . And it is doubtful if the published records of any other southern state excel those of Maryland either in quantity or quality." ³⁹

In 1885, the society's Committee on the State Archives "desire[d] to record" the admirable services of "Miss Harris and Miss Morris" in copying early records. President John H. B. Latrobe noted the "faithfulness and accuracy in their work" among the official records of the society. 40 Copying historic documents went beyond the bounds of government-generated papers. Library volunteers such as Lucy Harwood Harrison meticulously copied surviving church records, family records in Bible pages, and any other fragile scrap of paper that might add a bit more information on Maryland and the people of its past. 41

In that same report to the membership, Latrobe assured his audience, "With the treasury in good condition, the president is happy in saying that the affairs of the Society at the present time are in all reports satisfactory." Indeed, all facets of the society's operations thrived in those closing years of the nineteenth century. The Gallery of Fine Art reported 7,810 visitors with an average attendance of 113 per each of the eleven Sundays they had opened during the previous year. And "on account of strong light" that shone through the new skylights, the society had installed inner curtains, at a cost of \$48, to protect the paintings. The adjustment proved "satisfactory." As it had since its inception in late 1844, the gallery at this time referred to fine art and not the artifacts and exhibits found in historical society galleries today. Nineteenth-century societies displayed artifacts in glass cases known as cabinets and decorated rooms in period themes. In the cabinet group, the acceptance and collection criteria, and ultimately the care of these objects, rested with the Library Committee. He acceptance and collection criteria and ultimately the care of these objects, rested with the Library Committee.

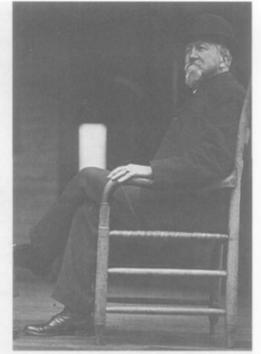
The library collections continued to grow, through donation and purchase—including one lot of fifty-nine volumes at a cost of \$110. Although librarian John W. M. Lee recorded a need for more European history, he did report a collection strong in Maryland "literature, books, and pamphlets" written "by natives or residents." The society held a "strong and important" newspaper collection, and the library had been used, for many years, "almost wholly for reference and for purposes of investigation and study." Lee, with Publications Committee members Bradley T. Johnson, and Henry Stockbridge reported that the society had issued the second volume of the *Archives of Maryland* and two additional fund publications, Numbers 19 and 20. The committee distributed all three publications to members



Lucy Harwood Harrison (1847–1933) transcribed documents for the first fifty volumes of the Archives of Maryland. (Maryland Historical Society.)

and exchange societies. This committee also worked on copying original documents and had completed projects such as the vestry book of St. John's Parish (Piscataway), Prince George's County, 1693–1800, "about 400 folio pages." ⁴⁶

It is clear from the activities noted in this report that the leaders of the Maryland Historical Society had grown confident and secure during their first fifty years. The collections told something of the visual history of the state's colonial past. Published papers and documents sold and exchanged across the country took the Maryland story far beyond its borders. The Athenaeum, built and main-

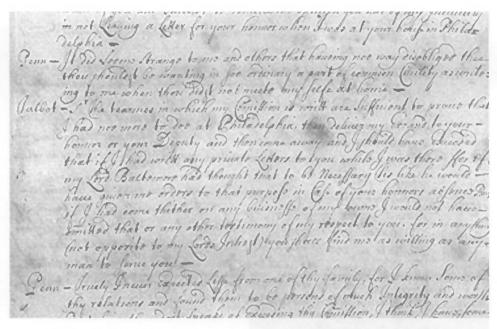


Bradley T. Johnson, c. 1890, served on the Publications Committee. (Maryland Historical Society.)

tained debt free, stood as a fitting shrine to both the state's history and the society's founders. Additionally, they had met their self-proclaimed obligation to educate the public through exhibits of fine art in the gallery. Those exhibits added to the society's income and helped the organization maintain a sound financial base. Most remarkably, the society had rebuilt itself after the war and quickly resumed the business of history.

Despite its obvious successes, the society had weathered charges of elitism from its earliest days. The founders and their societal heirs admitted to membership only the established leaders of Maryland's first families, either by lineage or wealth and social position. The officers restricted the use of the library to serious researchers. In those same years, hard at work in the nation's colleges and universities, the new historians and educators of the Progressive Era finished their degrees and emerged confident in their ability to write about the past. Within a generation, these young scholars fundamentally changed the scope and content of American—and local—history.

The era of great change for the nation's historical societies came as the nineteenth century turned to the twentieth. The progressive forces that strove to democratize American politics, clean up the cities, and increase mandatory school attendance, also "brought major new content to the historical societies." Education for the general public, and school children, became the historical societies' newest



The Calvert Papers, one of the society's most important acquisitions.

mission. The vision took shape in the hands of Wisconsin's Reuben Gold Thwaites who recognized that historical societies had a responsibility to public education. This first progressive historical society contributed content to public school history, presented pageants, initiated museum and historic site marker programs, and publicly celebrated anniversaries. These outreach efforts served the public as well as the scholar, and the impact is still visible in the movement today.⁴⁷

The Maryland Historical Society did not establish a formal education program until well into the twentieth century and remained committed to collecting and publishing the state's colonial records. A strong alliance with the state government that may have yielded a long-standing partnership such as that in Wisconsin eluded the society's leaders. This colonial focus, though, did bring forth one fortuitous opportunity. In late spring 1888, John W. M. Lee boarded a ship for England to negotiate for "1,300 documents formerly belonging to the Lords Baltimore" —the Calvert Papers. Society officers and members, such as Mendes Cohen and T. Harrison Garrett, initiated plans for the acquisition and contributed funds to the project.

Lee examined the papers, which had been discovered buried in an outbuilding on the estate of Calvert descendant Colonel Frederick Henry Harford, grandson of Henry Harford, last proprietor of the Maryland colony. Lee traveled from Harford's attorney's office in London to the estate near Windsor for additional information about the collection and, satisfied, purchased the lot. He then escorted this valuable cargo, shipped from England to America in iron trunks aboard



Mendes Cohen supported the Calvert Papers project and later served as the society's president, 1903–1913. (Maryland Historical Society.)

the Servia. The steamer docked in Baltimore on the evening of June 11, 1888, and Lee promptly deposited the trunks in the society's fireproof vault. The glory of this most auspicious occasion was overshadowed by the news that Garrett, Lee's sponsor, had died in a tragic boating accident during his friend's absence. Divers recovered Garrett's body the day after Lee returned from his historic trip.⁴⁸

The Century Turns, 1890-1910

The Progressive Era also witnessed the rise of "ethnic Americanism," a development that centered on national rather than local organizations and one that promoted an "inclusive concept of American identity." These groups of minority citizens fused their identities to national values in an effort to offset discrimination. For example, Johns Hopkins University professor Cyrus Adler founded the American Jewish Historical Society in 1892; among their missions the group sought to overcome anti-Semitism. German Americans founded the German American Historical Society in Philadelphia in 1901. Marion Dexter Learned, first editor of the organization's German American Annals, held the chair of the German department at the University of Pennsylvania and recruited scholars known for their work on German settlements in North America. The Society for the History of Germans in Maryland organized in 1887 and shared the Athenaeum with the his-

torical society. The leaders of these first ethnic historical societies focused their energies and missions on connecting their heritages to an American past.

Black Americans organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and published the *Journal of Negro History*. Carter G. Woodson, the second black American to receive a Ph.D., had "faith that the bare (scientific) truth about black achievers and their contributions would erode prejudice and build self esteem." In the racially violent climate of post—*Plessy v. Ferguson*, when the federal government legalized segregation under a doctrine of "separate but equal," this group inspired an historically conscious black elite and a coterie of black history specialists.

At state and national societies, newly educated historians brought a "creeping professionalism" to American history. The trend became most apparent in publications programs where university-trained scholars produced dry reports of their "scientific investigations" into the past—a tactic that effectively removed history from the talented, if celebratory, pens of literary writers. State and national journals published critical book reviews of new publications, demanded a higher standard of interpretation, and included a broader range of subjects. They successfully placed ethnic topics more solidly in the larger context of American history.⁴⁹

Midwestern societies incorporated ethnic and local history, again undoubtedly due to the timing of their rise and the shared past of their residents. In the East elitism endured. Many heads of older societies regarded the leadership of professional historians as intrusive, and ethnic minorities generally found themselves unwelcome until the middle of the century.⁵⁰

Professionals in the Library

The library of the Maryland Historical Society remained the group's intellectual nerve center well into the twentieth century, and as the new professionals crept into history, so did professional library science seep into the halls of the Athenaeum. The advent of library science added additional issues to the long history of control struggles between the librarian and members of the Library Committee. In 1877, the committee had appointed John Wesley Murray Lee as Librarian and Curator of the Cabinet, and he divided his time between the society and the Mercantile Library Association, then housed on the Athenaeum's first floor. The new librarian held a position of esteem in the society, one with expanded authority.

Formerly, the librarian also served as Keeper of the Cabinet, though he worked under the direction of the Library Committee.⁵¹ The committee managed the library and although the society did employ librarians, society members often took on that role in matters of organization and in determining which books and manuscripts to purchase. Additionally, a universal cataloging system did not exist until the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and terse discussions on the



Annie Leakin Sioussat, the society's historian at the turn of the last century. (Maryland Historical Society.)

organization and cataloging of books and manuscripts peppered the committee's minutes.

The situation greatly frustrated all parties. "Library policy often depended on the forceful personality of either the librarian or individual members of the library committee, usually without regard to professional librarianship." ⁵² For ex-

ample, Lee gained the authority to purchase books and periodicals through a revision in the society's constitution in 1880, but the committee overrode his power of purchase in 1886 after he spent what they considered too much money on a broadside. Recurring tension and criticism prompted the librarian to take "the occasion to say that he would never again make purchases without the committee's permission."53 Lee left for England the following year to negotiate for the Calvert Papers and several months later the committee drafted a librarian's job description—an imperative, as the society had no "definite standards for which [an] appeal may be made for the settlement of misunderstandings as they may arise."54 Additionally, the librarian should be in daily attendance during the hours the library was open since the collection warranted constant supervision. He should "keep abreast" of new publications listed in dealer catalogs and announcements of forthcoming auctions where additional rare books and manuscripts might be purchased.55

The committee once again demonstrated its dominance over Lee, this time on the issue of the card catalogue. Lee had painstakingly rearranged the books and pamphlets in what he considered a logical order, but the committee countered that "this transposition, as it had not been observed by any member of the committee whilst in actual progress must have been accomplished out of library hours or on Sundays. . . . it is safe to say that it involves the changing of some thousand cards." Lee requested a hearing in defense of the charges, but the committee ordered him to "restore the books and pamphlets to their former places as indicated by the Catalogue, and that no other or future changes be made in the position of books and pamphlets" without the assent of the committee. 56

Regardless of the disagreements discussed above, the library committee members, librarians, volunteers, and members of the Maryland Historical Society have consistently worked toward amassing a premier collection of books and research materials and making these holdings available to interested researchers.

No Longer a Male Domain

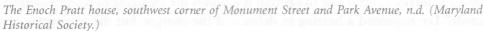
These years also found women admitted to full membership. Among the first was Mrs. Annie Leakin Sioussat, who had long served as a volunteer in the library and throughout the institution. Daughter of a well-established family, she devoted much of her time to history, both in and out of the society. She helped organize the National Society of Colonial Dames, held offices in the Daughters of the Barons of Runnymede, the Arundell Club, and the Civic League, and served as the historian of the Maryland Historical Society for decades. As stated earlier, women in Maryland's society could attend lectures in the years after the Civil War but could not hold membership. In other states, as in this one, women volunteered but were excluded from the "onerous burthen" of full membership—specifically, voting

and fund raising.57

Baltimore-born Lucy Harwood Harrison spent more than fifty years in the service of the Maryland Historical Society. Her biographer rightly noted that "for long, distinguished, and uninterrupted service to the State of Maryland, few can equal [her] record." Harrison is credited with meticulously transcribing state documents for the first fifty volumes of the *Archives of Maryland* and with applying that same skill and diligence to deciphering and copying "ancient" papers such as parish registers, will indexes, and land records. A fractured hip in the winter of 1932 left her housebound and forced her to resign her position.⁵⁸

The Move to Monument Street

On February 7, 1904, the necessity for modern accommodations became urgent when a catastrophic fire destroyed more than 140 acres and over fifteen hundred buildings in the city's business district. Flames lapped at buildings just blocks from the Athenaeum, and the society's members feared for the safety of the history they had so carefully guarded for six decades. The ruins of the great fire smoldered as a small group of members gathered for their monthly meeting the following day. The annual meeting, scheduled for that same night, was postponed





Undated photograph of the stable behind the Pratt house. The Keyser Memorial Building, below, stands in its place. The addition gave the historical society gallery and library space. (Maryland Historical Society.)



until March. Discussion of a modern fireproof facility dominated the evening's discussion, yet fifteen years passed before the society gained a new home—the Enoch Pratt house.⁵⁹

The organization moved to its current home at 201 West Monument Street in 1919. The house, with a state-of-the-art fireproof addition, came as a gift from Mrs. (Mary Washington) H. Irvine Keyser, whose husband had been an active member of the society for forty-three years. The dedication ceremony, conducted in the victorious aftermath of the First World War, reinforced the importance of history for all in attendance and demonstrated that "the spirit of our illustrious fathers still lives in undiminished vigor." Governor Emerson C. Harrington delivered an address in





The Athenaeum, 1930, shortly before demolition. (Maryland Historical Society.)

which he cited the long roll of Maryland's notable heroes and its celebrated past—from Calvert and his experiment in religious liberty through the Revolution with Thomas Johnson and Tench Tilghman, the War of 1812 with Baltimore's citizen soldiers, and *The Star-Spangled Banner*. The state's National Guardsmen had served with patriotism and great courage in the recent war, an honor to their ancestors, and the Maryland Historical Society stood prepared to care for the material remnants of that war and to preserve those relics for generations.⁶⁰

Festivities reached providential heights when Bernard C. Steiner, Hopkins PhD and Pratt librarian, likened the society's mission to that of Jesus, "son of Sirach":

The Lord hath wrought great glory by them, through HIS great power from the beginning. There be of them that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported. And some there be which have no memorial. But their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant. The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will show forth their praise. ⁶¹

Yet the glory and pride of the moment also brought a new and more complex financial responsibility as the business of history nationwide expanded, and the costs of maintaining collections and hiring professional staff increased demand on the operating budget. In 1921, the society's officers drafted an appeal for a permanent endowment of \$300,000 to offset its \$5,000 to \$6,000 annual deficit. The finance committee noted that the buildings "will in an adequate manner meet permanently the needs of the society." Mrs. Keyser, they reported, "has erected, at great cost, a thoroughly modern fire-proof building in which the paintings, books, and valuable records of the society are entirely protected from fire and rendered readily accessible to the public."

In this formal statement of appreciation and in the content of the appeal, the officers paid first attention to paintings, then to books and documents, the emphasis still on the society's fine art holdings. They boasted of a "fine collection of early American portraits, examples by old masters, heavily Italian school,"—a legacy of the founders and their fascination with fine art and with their desire to educate the public through art shows. The leaders of the society held onto this role long after the Walters Art Gallery opened as the city's repository of classical works. Additional collections showcased in the *Appeal* include, "Washingtonia," the Edris and Virginia Berkely Memorial Collection of Washington Prints, and the Noel Wyatt Collection, an example of "a residence in Baltimore" in the 1850s.⁶² Dues remained five dollars, "as they have always been."

The society maintained ownership of the Athenaeum after the move to Monument Street and leased it to the State of Maryland for a "very small margin of net income." Although the expenses of maintaining the Athenaeum, utilities, janitorial



Charles Bonaparte, Betsy Bonaparte's grandson and his wife, Ellen Channing Day. Ellen presented the society with her famous grandmother-in-law's jewelry, clothing, and portraits. (Maryland Historical Society.)

service, taxes, and the renovation loan payment yielded little profit, the grand old building served as a valuable source of revenue, first as a rental and then through its sale in 1924. The amount, \$130,000, was the largest to that time, added to the endowment fund. Chronicler Harold Manakee wrote that the monies gained from the sale of the Athenaeum proved to be "a more significant and creative gift than the generous presentation of the new building . . . [the increased endowment served as] the prime factor in maintaining services through trying financial periods." ⁶³

The new space allowed for more displays and put forth the society, in the minds of its leaders and of the public, as the logical caretaker of Maryland treasures. Among the "outstanding examples" in the society's care was the Betsy Bonaparte collection, entrusted to the institution in 1922 by Ellen Channing Day Bonaparte, widow of Betsy's grandson, Charles. Other funding priorities targeted the growing number of documents, housed in the new library. Among those deemed most important were maps for "the determination of boundaries and riparian [water] rights" and church and court records for those interested in historical and genealogical research. In those early days of the twentieth century, most American family researchers looked for evidence that connected them to the colony's founding families or Revolutionary War veterans in order that they might claim membership in exclusive lineage societies such as the Soci-

ety of the Ark and the Dove or the Sons, or Daughters, of the American Revolution.⁶⁴

Clearly, the society's leaders knew the value of what they held in trust for the citizens of Maryland. The library housed approximately thirty thousand volumes, newspapers, maps, and documents "the most valuable of the society's possessions are its manuscripts." Among the most prestigious were the Calvert Papers, the Carroll Papers, and the Otho Holland Williams collection of more than two thousand Revolutionary War letters. The finance committee also noted with pride that the society had published a total of thirty-nine papers with money from the Peabody Fund. Those publications had since ceased in favor of the quarterly Maryland Historical Magazine, first issued in 1906. "The magazine is the only direct point of contact between the society and all of its membership." Scholars and members held the journal, and the Archives of Maryland series, in high esteem.

The society's move to Monument Street prompted further changes, such as implementing the Library of Congress (LOC) card cataloging system, first published in 1902. Louis H. Dielman persuaded the society's Council to engage expert cataloger Caroline Davidson to reorganize the collection under the LOC scheme. Davidson agreed, and the society hired the part-time volunteer. Davidson's sister Elizabeth joined her the following year. The two became salaried employees in 1925 and worked until their retirement in 1943.⁶⁵

In addition to their ongoing mission to preserve and publish Maryland's history, the leaders of the society assumed responsibility for recent history as well. As had their predecessors in the aftermath of the Civil War, society leaders stood at the forefront of collecting the relics of the recent Great War. In 1920, the Maryland legislature formed a committee of three that included former governor and historical society president Edwin Warfield. This trio comprised the Historical Division of the state's War Records Commission and as such served as the "official organ" of the federal government in collecting and compiling the military records of those Marylanders who served in World War I. In creating the commission, the state dissolved the Committee of Defense and appointed George Radcliffe chair of the new division.

The historical society gathered and cataloged the individual records of those who had served their country, the histories of military units, and accounts of activities that "contributed to the war effort" or any matter "of war interest," including ephemera such as posters, bonds, and photographs. The project's offices occupied the entire second floor of the Pratt house. The Maryland Historical Society, long "recognized as the appropriate depository of portraits, archives, and objects," cared for tomorrow's history as carefully as they had the history of the past. During the war years the Maryland Historical Magazine featured "In Memoriam" tributes to those fallen Marylanders whose families held membership in the society. The descriptions conjure haunting, romantic images, of the sort



Above, former governor and MdHS president Edwin Warfield (in civilian attire) worked on Maryland's War Records Commission. Right, cheering crowds lined East Baltimore Street in June 1919 to celebrate the return of Maryland's soldiers from the Great War. (Maryland Historical Society.)

John McCrae penned in *In Flanders Fields*—poetic images that masked the horror of twentieth-century warfare and in its aftermath gave voice to the writers of the Lost Generation.

Toward the Great Depression

At the time the officers of the Maryland Historical Society wrote their appeal for endowment funds, the organization stood as the sole caretaker of the state's past and, by law, the official and legal repository of select government records. The society received state funding for projects such as the *Archives of Maryland* series and the War Records Commission. Its officers, "among the most prominent citizens of our state," were never paid for their services and invested countless hours and immeasurable energy in keeping the institution intellectually and financially viable. Although the move to Monument Street had "crippled" the society's activities through lack of funds due to the higher cost of maintenance and other expenses that demanded higher revenue, the tone of the *Appeal* was optimistic and did not doubt either the society's mission or its permanence.

This eminent group preserved and made available documents that imprinted Maryland's unique past on generations of curious researchers and put forth in-





Former French premier Georges Clemenceau, the "Tiger of France," spoke at the society in 1922. (Maryland Historical Society.)

formation "of constant value in the determination of practical questions raised in our courts," information that "cannot be obtained elsewhere." The organization attracted internationally prominent speakers such as Georges Clemenceau, the "Tiger of France," who addressed the group in 1922. Member H. Crawford Black's family offered their home to the former French premier and then learned:

To the consternation of those making the arrangements . . . the great man demanded hot onion soup served in his room at exactly "two hours past midnight." The problem [was] not only that of finding a chef who could produce flawless French onion soup, but also that of finding one willing to prepare it at such an hour—not on one morning alone, but on the several mornings of the "Tiger's" visit.

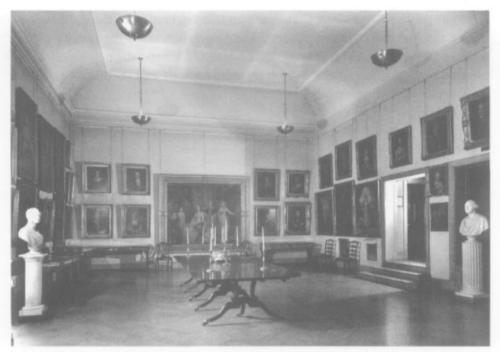
The society recorded its relief at having "come through with flying colors . . . Franco-American relations did not suffer." 66

The society's leaders worked through the 1920s toward building their endowment and settling into their new home. The end of the decade and the following dozen years brought two major events that impacted the organization and redi-

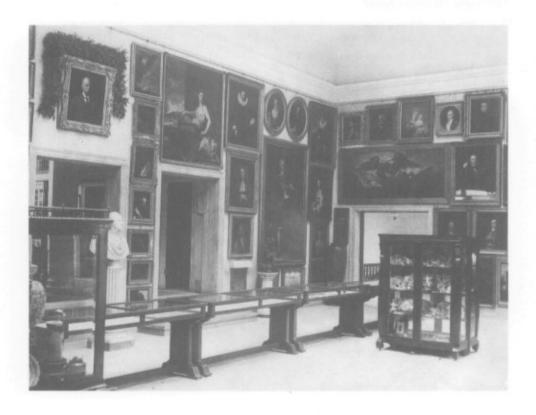
rected its mission—the Great Depression and, in celebration of the state's tercentenary, the Maryland Hall of Records. The Depression taxed the group's already strained financial resources. The Maryland Hall of Records, the new repository of the state's papers, forced the society to redefine itself and its place among the state's cultural institutions.

The MdHS library, 1920. Note the researcher's attire, in particular the straw hat on the table. (Maryland Historical Society.)





Two views of the MdHS gallery, 1920. This space is now part of the library. (Maryland Historical Society.)



Notes

- 1. Brugger, Middle Temperament, 248. For Baltimore in the Civil War, see Scott Sumpter Sheads and Daniel Carroll Toomey, Baltimore During the Civil War (Linthicum, Md.: Toomey Press, 1997); for a detailed study of the Pratt Street riot, see Charles W. Mitchell, "'The Whirlwind Now Gathering': Baltimore's Pratt Street Riot and the End of Maryland Secession," MdHM, 97 (2002): 202–32. The most respected first-hand account is George William Brown, Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April, 1861 (Baltimore: N. Murray, Publication Agent, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887). Brown, a member of the Maryland Historical Society, served as mayor of Baltimore until his arrest and imprisonment at Fort McHenry and later Fort Warren. For a decidedly southern view of the riot and the war, see J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (1881, reprint Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971).
- 2. Charles W. Mitchell, "'The Whirlwind Now Gathering': Baltimore's Pratt Street Riot and the End of Maryland Secession," *MdHM*, 97 (2002): 202–32.
- 3. The literature on the Civil War is vast. James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) remains an outstanding account. For Maryland in the Civil War, see Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, chap. 6; and Robert I. Cottom and Mary Ellen Hayward, *Maryland in the Civil War: A House Divided* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1994). For military activity in the city, see Kathryn Lerch, *History of the Eighth New York Heavy Artillery in Baltimore*, (working title) forthcoming from the Maryland Historical Society,
- 4. Cox, "A Century of Frustration" *MdHM*, 78 (1983): 110.
- 5. For biographical information on Wallis, see Conway W. Sams and Elihu S. Riley, *The Bench and Bar of Maryland: A History*, 1634–1901 (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1901), 372–76; Dielman/Hayward File, Maryland Historical Society Library; *Proceedings of the Maryland Historical Society In Commemoration of the Late Severn Teackle Wallis, President of the Society* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1894).
- 6. William Hand Browne, later respected editor of the *Archives of Maryland*, spent the war years quietly in Baltimore County. Afterward he rose to "prominence as a leader in the work of restoring the cultural condition of the South . . . through literary periodicals," Dielman/Hayward files, MdHS Library.
- 7. For Kennedy's Civil War years, see Patricia Dockman Anderson, "From Politics to Patriotism: John Pendleton Kennedy in Defense of the Union," unpublished paper, Towson University, 1993, in possession of the author. Kennedy's most recent biographer wrote, "When Kennedy presented diplomas at the commencement of the University of Maryland, graduates known to be southern sympathizers were applauded and bouquets tied with red and white ribbons were thrown on the stage. Unionists were roundly hissed. Acquaintances of many years standing rebuffed him by bellowing 'No, Sir! No, Sir!' when he passed them on the street. When he entered a room, old friends hastened to leave by a side door. . . . Almost an outcast in his native city, he found himself honored in the North, and in 1863 Harvard College made specific mention of his loyalty to the Union in conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws." See Bohner, *Kennedy*, 229–30.
- 8. For the founders' Civil War activities see their biographical files in the Dielman/Hayward File, MdHS Library. For a personal account of the riot and its aftermath, see George William Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 1861: A Study of the War (1887; repr., Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 9–10.
- 9. Cox, "A Century of Frustration" *MdHM*, 78 (1983): 110.

- 10. Olson, Baltimore, 149-97.
- 11. Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies*, 118–19.
- 12. Dunlop, *Historical Societies*, 135; for a full history of the Virginia Historical Society, see Melvin I. Urofsky, "The Virginia Historical Society: The First 175 Years, 1831–2006," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 114 (2006): 2–200.
- 13. Brantz Mayer, *History, Possessions, and Prospects of the Maryland Historical Society*, Fund Publication No. 1 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1867), 23.
- 14. Ibid., 17-18, 23, 24, 29, 30.
- 15. Franklin Parker, *George Peabody, A Biography* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1972), 88–90.
- 16. Minute Book, April 1, 1858, MdHS Papers.
- 17. Parker, George Peabody, 90.
- 18. Bohner, Kennedy, 214–15; Parker, George Peabody, 89–90.
- 19. Parker, George Peabody, 90.
- 20. For a discussion of cultural offerings in late nineteenth-century Baltimore, see Patricia Dockman Anderson, "Herbert Baxter Adams, the Last Gentleman Historian," senior honor's thesis, Towson University, 1996, 19–20; Higham, "Ethnic Historical Societies," 32.
- 21. Mayer, *History, Possessions, and Prospects*, 16–17, emphasis in the original. The value of \$20,000 in 1867 is \$247,000 in 2006.
- 22. Mayer, *History, Possession and Prospects*, 13–14; Rutledge, "Early Art Exhibitions of the Maryland Historical Society," 124–36.
- 23. Mayer, History, Possessions and Prospects, 19.
- 24. Minutes of the Library Committee, MdHS Papers, March 23, 1875.
- 25. Mayer, History, Possessions and Prospects, 22.
- 26. Baltimore American, December 2, 1848; Dielman/Hayward files.
- 27. Mayer, *History, Possessions and Prospects*, 26–27. For an account of copy painting in nineteenth-century Baltimore, see Gretchen M. Cooke, "On the Trail of Alfred Jacob Miller," *MdHM*, 97 (2002): 321–36.
- 28. For the centennial, see Sean Dennis Cashman, America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt (New York: New York University Press, 1993), chap. 1.
- 29. Baltimore American, quoted in Olson, Baltimore, 193.
- 30. Cox, "A Century of Frustration," note 79.
- 31. For more on Adams and the MdHS, see Patricia Dockman Anderson, "Laying the Foundations: Herbert Baxter Adams, John Thomas Scharf, and Early Maryland Historical Scholarship," *MdHM*, 89 (1994): 170–83. An outstanding account of the early JHU is Hugh Hawkins, *Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University*, 1874–1889 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960); Minutes of the Library Committee, MdHS Papers, February 13, 1882.
- 32. Higham, "Ethnic Historical Societies," 32.
- 33. Ibid., 32–33. For the strike, see Olson, *Baltimore*, 194–97, and Linda Shopes and Elizabeth Fee, *Baltimore: New Views on Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991, chap. 1.
- 34. "The practice of consistent legislative appropriation for historical societies, first developed in Wisconsin during the second half of the nineteenth century, soon became general throughout the Middle and Far West. As Massachusetts is a prototype of the earlier privately supported historical society, so the State Historical Society of Wisconsin may be considered that of the publicly supported one. Notwithstanding this century-old tradition . . . many state historical societies along the eastern seaboard still operate entirely upon private funds." Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies*, 166.
- 35. Higham, "Ethnic Historical Societies," 33; Brugger, Middle Temperament, 250.

- 36. The Archives of Maryland series, with many additional volumes, is now available online at the Maryland State Archives.
- 37. Cox, "Century of Frustration," 107.
- 38. For a full account of the legislative effort to collect and preserve Maryland's documents, see Anderson, "Laying the Foundations," and Cox, "Century of Frustration."
- 39. Jack P. Greene, Johns Hopkins University, c.1955, quoted in Cox, "Frustration," 110.
- 40. Annual Report of the Officers and Committees of the Maryland Historical Society 1884–1885 (Baltimore: John Murphy & Company, 1885), 23.
- 41. For Lucy Harwood Harrison, see Margie A. Luckett, *Maryland Women* (Baltimore: published by the author, 1931), 178.
- 42. Annual Report, 1884-1885, 4.
- 43. Ibid., 6.
- 44. By 1938, under the guidance of Gallery Committee chairman John H. Scarff, the society redirected its displays from "miscellaneous display" to "organized exhibition of gallery and museum holdings," Manakee, "Quarter Century," 63.
- 45. Annual Report, 1884-1885, 13.
- 46. Ibid., 21–22. The committee printed 500 copies, "uniform with the previous issues of the Peabody Fund," printed at a cost of \$404.51 and purchased four hundred copies of the second volume of the *Archives* for \$267.64.
- 47. Lord, Keepers of the Past, 6.
- 48. Ruth Lee Briscoe, "John W. M. Lee, 1848–1896," MdHM 32 (1937): 6–8.
- 49. Higham, "Ethnic Historical Societies," 34–36.
- 50. Ibid., 36.
- 51. Thomas L. Hollowak, "A History of the Maryland Historical Society Library, 1844–1975," Pamphlet 10,130, Maryland Historical Society Library, 9–10. Melvil Dewey founded the American Library Association in 1876.
- 52. Hollowak, "Library," 16.
- 53. Minutes of the Library Committee, May 4, 1886.
- 54. Ibid., February 8, 1890.
- 55. Hollowak, "Library," 13.
- 56. Ibid., 15; Minutes of the Library Committee, May 5, 1890. The 1898 Constitution and Bylaws of the Maryland Historical Society clearly delineated the librarian's responsibilities, "Proceedings of the Society," *MdHM*, 9 (1914): 193.
- 57. Luckett, Maryland Women, 420-27; Dunlop, American Historical Societies, 36, 38.
- 58. Proceedings of the Society, February 13, 1933.
- 59. St. George L. Sioussat, "After Fifty Years: A Review of the Beginnings," *MdHM*, 50 (1955): 276.
- 60. "Dedication of the H. Irvine Keyser Memorial Building," MdHM, 14 (1919):7–9.
- 61. Ibid., 23-24; Ecclesiasticus 44: 7-13, 15.
- 62. Maryland Historical Society, 1844–1921 (Baltimore: Norman T. A. Munder & Co., 1921).
- 63. Manakee, "Quarter Century," 59.
- 64. Five decades later, as Americans prepared to celebrate their bicentennial and the block-buster miniseries *Roots* aired on television, genealogical research captivated millions.
- 65. Minutes of the Council, November 5, 1943, MdHS Papers.
- 66. Manakee, "Quarter Century," 60.

MARYLAND TERCENTENARY 1634—1934





Tradition and Generosity

To celebrate the state's three hundredth birthday. Seven years in the planning, and "an opportunity for the state to show off all its colors," the springlong festivities included dedication of a forty-foot cross on St. Clement's Island, site of the Calvert party landing, and pageants in which dignitaries played the roles of Leonard Calvert, Father Andrew White, and Margaret Brent. Dignitaries spoke, visitors danced, and the "beer taps ran ceaselessly in the hot dog and hamburger oasis across Middle Street from the pageant field." Concurrent events on the Isle of Wight included dedication of a memorial plaque to mark the point from which the *Ark* and the *Dove* departed England. In Baltimore, the Maryland Yacht Club hosted a regatta, and theaters in the city and across the state featured "sound movies of the Tercentenary celebration at St. Mary's City." Among the memorials the commission deemed fitting was a "Memorial Hall of Records in which shall be gathered and perpetually preserved all of the public records of the Province and State of Maryland to the adoption of the Federal Constitution." 1

The Tercentenary Commission, on which several historical society members served, agreed that the repository should be located in Annapolis, the seat of government, and with this action transferred documentary care of the colonial past to the state. Years passed between that early meeting in 1928 and the completion of the Hall of Records, in large part because of the Depression. Ultimately one of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the Public Works Administration, funded construction on the campus of St. John's College, and the state's new archives opened in early 1935.2 Among its most ardent supporters was Morris L. Radoff, who served as state archivist from its founding in 1934 until his retirement in 1974. In this, "the formative era of southern state archives," the Maryland Hall of Records stood as the "chief monument" to emerge from the Tercentenary celebrations, one that would serve for generations. Despite its apparently collegial origins, the decision prompted a reactionary reluctance from the historical society to turn their colonial government papers over to the state. Yet the drive for the Hall of Records simply underscored the society's changed priorities in the early years of the twentieth century, from the passionate commitment of its founders, particularly Brantz Mayer, who had lobbied the legislature on several occasions for funds to preserve colonial documents and secure their future in the care of the Maryland Historical Society. His successors, although committed to their narrow slice of colonial history, did not express an interest in the entire mass of colonial records or in the records of more recent events. So it was that, with the exception of the Archives of Maryland project, they missed an opportunity to forge

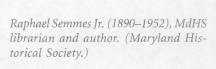


Librarian Charles Fickus with an unidentified assistant, 1920. (Maryland Historical Society.)

a strong and enduring partnership with Maryland's government. Popular interest in the state's tri-centennial generated wide support for broader state history and for the Annapolis facility.³

The Maryland Historical Society weathered the economic hardships of the Great Depression relatively well, although the council reported in 1934 that unlike the state, "Neither the society or its members appear to fall within the beneficent scope of the alphabetical agencies through . . . which so great relief is anticipated." The treasurer reported in the "General Account" that despite "wise and constant attention" the society had "expended more than it received . . . to the extent of \$32.98." Ineligible for New Deal assistance, the society endured, though the downturn hit the library particularly hard. Mandatory staff cuts and a reduction in the budget, from \$7,000 in 1932 to \$5,800 in 1933, severely curtailed services. In 1935, after the death of librarian Charles Fickus, member and volunteer Francis Culver directed the library until the lack of money for salaries forced him to leave. The Council did not employ another librarian until 1939, at which time they hired Raphael Semmes.

Membership dropped in 1932, from 1,221 in January to 1,116 in December, a "net decrease of 105 members in all classes." Reports from all committees reflected the impact of the crash, yet at the annual meeting the Council reported that all in all they had fared well:





As with every report of Board of Directors to Stockholders Meetings, in these parlous times, so that of your council is regretful in retrospect, enduring in the present and hopeful for the future. While invested of capital but one security appears to have suffered serious and permanent loss the Society's income from that source is materially reduced, as it also is by reduction of rental rooms by the State, by inability of members to meet their accrued dues, and by resignation of members whose impaired incomes constrain them to discontinue participation in the maintenance of the Society and to suffer the consequent deprivation of its enjoyment. . . . [they] have uniformly expressed sincere regret and usually the hope of return when their financial skies shall have become less overcast.

Maryland artifacts continued to go out on loan, both locally and nationally, as seen in the Gallery Committee's report that seven "valuable portraits," loaned to the Corcoran Gallery for use in an exhibit celebrating George Washington's centennial, "have been returned uninjured." The Publications Committee brought volumes 48 and 49 of the Archives of Maryland into print, and the Maryland Historical Magazine made its quarterly appearance uninterrupted by the reduction in the operating budget. Gifts of portraits, silver, and "other articles" made their way to Monument Street via the descendants of old and distinguished Maryland



The Confederate Room, c. 1930. (Maryland Historical Society.)

families. Eaton heirs expressed their appreciation of a gallery room that show-cased their family's heirlooms and contributions to the state.⁶ President W. Hall Harris closed the meeting on a note at once optimistic and cryptic:

And so we close a somewhat imperfect day and look forward hopefully to another and more nearly perfect one, where we—the financially innocent—shall not continue to suffer for the sins of the financially guilty—whoever they may be—if any.⁷

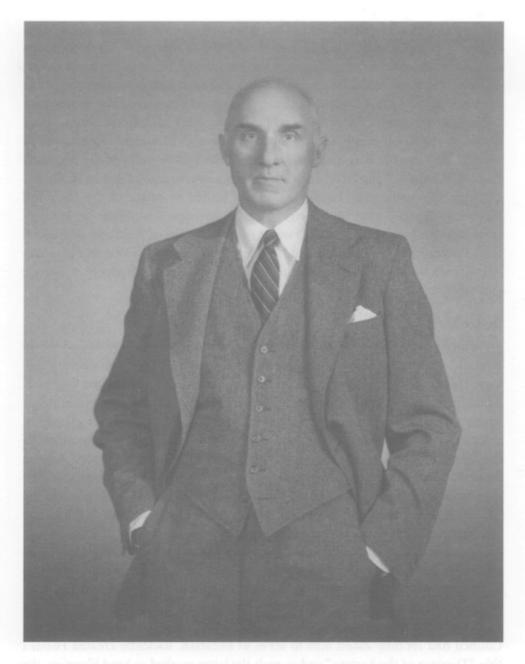
The society survived the Great Depression, albeit with abbreviated offerings to members and friends. They opened their doors to the public for fewer hours each day in an effort to provide maximum service with minimal staff and to save on operating costs. Among the limited number of events, in the spring of 1938 the president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy presented the society with two engravings, one of General Robert E. Lee, the other of Jefferson Davis, "to be placed in the Confederate Room," a perpetuation of the leadership's southern heritage and identity that continued well into the middle years of the twentieth century. Winners of the UDC's historical essay contest received copies of the engravings. This same year, Louis H. Dielman retired as editor of the *Maryland Historical Magazine* after twenty-eight years at its helm. Committee on Publications member Jacob Hall Pleasants wrote that in the face of shrinking appropriations for publications, Deilman had "in one way or another, with a sort of editorial wizard's wand, been able year after year to fill its pages with papers of interest and value."

Better Days

Fortunately, the society rebounded during the turbulent years of the Second World War and attracted more visitors than at any point in its twentieth-century history. This surge in attendance came with the election of U.S. Senator George F. Radcliffe to the president's chair. Radcliffe initiated a series of evening meetings at which attendees heard "many eminent scholars, diplomats, cabinet members, military leaders, members of Congress and public officials," the large numbers of the "general public, taxing the capacity of the society's seating space." Among those who spoke was then vice president Harry S. Truman, on March 27, 1945, less than three weeks before Franklin Roosevelt's death elevated the Missourian to the nation's highest office. In Baltimore, Truman addressed an audience of more than 350 on the subject of "Maryland and Tolerance."9

Radcliffe also designed the management structure by which the society operates today. Insistent on employing a "trained and enthusiastic director to implement further service of the society on a full-time basis," he approached James W. Foster, former head of the Maryland Department of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. At the time, in 1942, Foster edited the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, and the Council had recently asked him to serve as librarian. Radcliffe created Foster's title, "Director of the Society," and as such the latter worked as head librarian, the society's assistant secretary, editor of the magazine, and chief publicity agent.¹⁰

As the director's responsibilities increased and Foster spent more time out of the library, the Council appointed Harry Ammon who, in addition to the librarian's responsibilities enumerated twenty years earlier, took on editing the *Maryland Historical Magazine*. Seventeen years later, in 1965, new librarian Percy William Filby reported: "The title of Librarian is a misnomer because he is really



James W. Foster, the society's first director. President George Radcliffe created the position in 1947 as the demands of the insitution grew and required a paid administrator. (Maryland Historical Society.)

another assistant who fetches and carries, watches the desk whenever others of the staff are engaged elsewhere, and generally assists readers whenever necessary." $^{\rm n}$

"A Virile and Learned Centenarian"

The society celebrated its centennial in 1944, and poet and author Archibald MacLeish led the program at the Peabody Institute on February 21 of that winter. Samuel Dennis, member of the state legislature in 1904, Publications Committee in 1932, and vice president in 1938, delivered the keynote address. Dennis noted that the organization had held true to the founders' vision to "collect, preserve, and diffuse information relating to biography and to the civil and literary history of this state and of America." He commended the active descendants of the founders—Mayer, Latrobe, Donaldson, Brune, and Harris (whose grandfather, J. Morrison Harris, had lived to deliver the fiftieth-anniversary address) and hailed the society as a "virile and learned centenarian." ¹²

Dennis then summarized the society's sixty years at the Athenaeum, clearly an appeal for financial support, in part for a meeting room:

not fire proof, dingy, dark, and ill-suited . . . meetings held there were formidable . . . Minutes and correspondence were read *in extenso* to a mere handful of the faithful . . . and late in the evening they were rewarded, or punished, with a "discourse." Nor was the Athenaeum a pleasant place to work. Patient, pallid genealogists shuffled in perennial gloom; and the public rarely invaded their semi-solitude.¹³

The move to the Pratt house had "emancipated" them through Mrs. Keyser's generous gift, valued at \$200,000. The journal, Dennis noted, "supplies our widest popular appeal," for members could be found living across the country and in Europe. Few visited the society or listened to the lectures, yet the "Magazine reaches them all." The institution had survived "many vicissitudes, has survived or will survive three devastating wars. The Civil War reduced its life to a flickering flame . . . tonight, in spite of preoccupations due to war, its membership, usefulness, and public support, break all records." Once again the group sought financial support. It lacked guards "to protect exhibits . . . and manuscripts from theft." Records remained to be catalogued. The Monument Street rooms were "inadequate, the chairs hard." The society needed a "comfortable lecture hall" and fireproof storage space. "Though the society has gone far, has succeeded beyond the hopes of its founders," Dennis concluded, it "needs, and will always need, additional income, for the requirements of culture are insatiate." 14

Dennis closed with a nod to Radcliffe's energies and accomplishments, confident that the president would figure out a way to raise the money. "George Radcliffe . . . give him time enough, let him do it his own way, and he will move the pyramids from Egypt to Druid Hill Park."

The end of the war brought new activities to the Monument Street facility. Foster inaugurated a series of afternoon lectures on arts and crafts, and experts in

these fields gave talks. Exhibits illustrated the discussions, and appreciative donors deeded their treasures to the care of Maryland's historians. Louis Dielman gave the library his Index of Maryland Biography, an invaluable finding aid of 150,000 entries, and in step with its tradition of targeting current events of future historical importance, specifically wars, the society struck yet another alliance with the state and formed the War Records Committee in 1945.¹⁵

Post-war, 1945-1976

In step with other American historical societies who were realigning their missions toward public education, the society's Council revised its constitution in 1946. They eliminated the old associate membership category and created affiliate memberships for individuals and institutions. New member applications went to the council for approval rather than the general membership, and new committees, Education, Relations with other Societies, and the War Records Committee, addressed areas of increased interest. 16

Early in the war Governor Herbert R. O'Conor approached George Radcliffe,

The society installed window displays such as this one at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and others in downtown department stores. (Maryland Historical Society.)



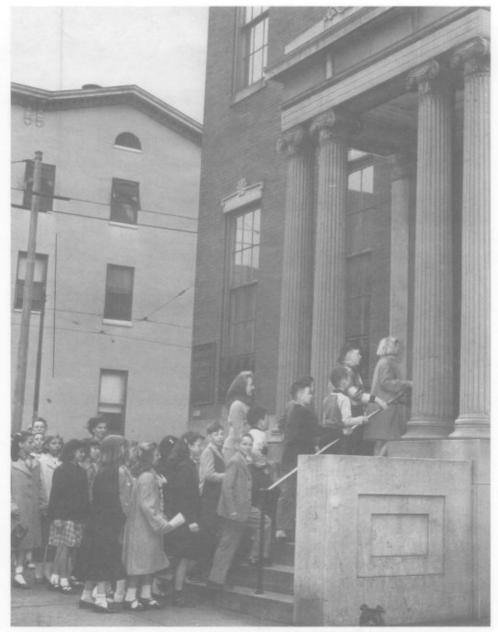


Post-war activities included presentation of the USS Maryland's silver service in 1947. Admiral Harry W. Hall gave the keynote address. (Maryland Historical Society.)

who had supervised the state's war records project after World War I, and asked him to "direct the collection, preservation, and publication" of the state's war records in the current conflict. O'Conor accepted Radcliffe's suggestion that the historical society take on the job, and in 1945 an act of the legislature secured the arrangement. Members of Radcliffe's committee, including John T. Menzies, Gary Black, Roger Brooke Hopkins, Howard W. Jackson, and Major J. Rieman McIntosh, under the supervision of Dr. Nelson B. Lasson and later Harold R. Manakee, ultimately produced a multi-volume account of Maryland's contributions to the war.¹⁷

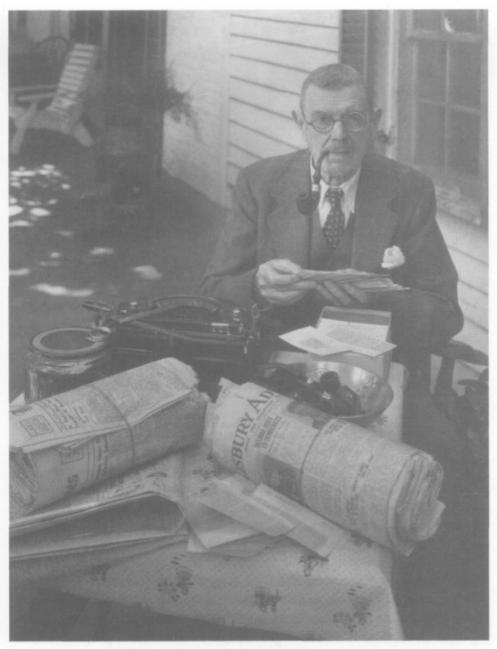
Maryland's post-war economy dipped as wartime industrial contracts ended at the same time 200,000 veterans returned home in search of work but quickly rebounded. In the subsequent upsurge, the wartime generation married, built homes, and created the "baby boom." For many, who were materially secure despite Cold War uncertainties, the future loomed bright and promising.¹⁸

Education ranked as a high priority, and the post-war Maryland Historical Society reached out to the city's public schools. In 1945 the group hosted a meeting of educators and members of patriotic societies to discuss how to place more emphasis on state history in the curriculum. Out of this gathering came the Com-



Maryland school children on a tour of the society, 1950. (Maryland Historical Society.)

mittee on Maryland History in the Schools. The following year, working with Baltimore's public schools, the society brought in children for tours. Members gave talks at school assemblies, developed classroom materials, and offered training sessions at teacher workshops. The society provided materials such as maps, pamphlets, and color slides in addition to publishing jointly with the public schools



Maryland Historical Magazine editor Louis H. Dielman (1864–1959) at work on his biographical index. (Maryland Historical Society.)

and the Enoch Pratt Free Library the Wheeler Leaflets in Maryland History, a series of teaching aids that addressed a variety of Maryland history topics.¹⁹

Additionally, this post-war decade brought valuable collections to the library, among them the Latrobe family holdings and the Hayward Biographical Index of



Governor Theodore McKeldin and society president George Radcliffe at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Thomas and Hugg Memorial Building, November 23, 1964. (Maryland Historical Society.)

Marriages and Deaths. Now combined with Dielman's biographical index, it is a key reference point for anyone searching for information on Marylanders and their families. Bequests to the endowment fund increased, Eleanor Passano donated her 100,000 entry-index to historic buildings, and the library gained many of the papers of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The society established a maritime division that included an exhibit room. Regarding personnel, Harold Manakee reported that in 1951 "the entire staff became eligible for the social security program." ²⁰

The society's optimism and enthusiasm in those better times following the Depression and the war is palpable in its papers. Membership grew steadily, reaching 2,926 in 1948, an indicator of growth and a validation of purpose. The increased demands on staff and facilities prompted concern among the society's officers about proper care of the collections and how they could best serve their members and the public. In his 1964 account of the society's previous twenty-five years, Harold Manakee stated that the "most notable gift" in the years between 1947 and 1952 came from William S. Thomas—"the epoch-making legacy of approximately \$750,000" for the construction and maintenance of a Thomas and Hugg Memorial Building.²¹

The society bought 209 and 211 West Monument Street in 1949, and a third house, 213, in 1953 that they might have enough land for the new wing. Eight years later, in 1961, the group purchased 217, 221, 223, and 225 West Monument Street and thus completed, with the exception of the property on the southeast corner of Monument and Howard Streets, its "real" holdings for the expansion. Most of these buildings housed tenants, another source of income, yet many needed major repairs and required high-cost maintenance. The group did use some of the space in these old houses for collection storage.

John L. Thomas, William's brother, died in June 1961 and left \$400,000 to the society. Coupled with his brother's bequest, well-invested and valued at just over \$3,000,000, the society had the resources for the new wing. The decision to build on Monument Street, however, brought public criticism due to fact that the organization planned to demolish the eight houses on the south side of Monument Street. The society considered the structures "in no sense unique and . . . over a long period had been wretchedly neglected by their owners." The council, building committee, and consultants considered the matter and reported that the "aesthetic and historic value of the houses was negligible" and the new building would benefit the area just west of Mount Vernon Place.

Thomas and Hugg construction, 1965. (Maryland Historical Society.)



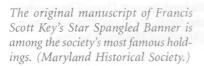
The Thomas and Hugg building, a Meyers and Ayers design completed in 1968, added handsomely to the society's holdings with "an exhibition area, an auditorium with audio-visual equipment, work rooms, storage space, and—to supplement the present Confederate Room—a Civil War Union Room," courtesy of Ernest A. Howard, Historical Society of Cecil County. Ninety-five years after setting up its Confederate shrine and in the midst of the Civil War centennial festivities, the new exhibit room stood as "an admirable complement to [its] longmaintained" counterpart. In 1981 the society added the France-Merrick wing, "a tribute to the Trustees of the Jacob and Annita France Foundation and Robert G. Merrick."²²

An American Icon

Perhaps no other object in the holdings of the Maryland Historical Society attracts more visitors to Monument Street than the original manuscript of Francis Scott Key's *Star-Spangled Banner*. In 1953, as the society's membership grew to 3,290, Mrs. Thomas C. Jenkins purchased the document from the Walters Art Gallery for \$26,400, the same price the gallery had paid for it in 1933 at a Sotheby's New York auction. Jenkins, who provided additional funding for the manuscript's display in a carved marble niche, had previously donated Key family portraits and funded a room for their display. One hundred forty years after Key penned his famous verse, state and local dignitaries gathered with the membership on September 14, 1954, in a formal and most solemn affair.²³ Six speakers addressed the audience, among them Governor Theodore McKeldin, Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Admiral Harry W. Hill, and Reverend William M. J. Driscoll who, with a terrible world war less than a decade removed and the guns of the Korean War but recently silenced, opened the evening with an invocation:

Oh, Lord: this Star-Spangled Banner and all it stands for we love with our whole hearts. Protect it with Thy omnipotent power [and] cherish it with Thy infinite love; give peace and security to this land so precious to us.... The bombs are still bursting in air; there is, across the world, the cannons' red glare; may our flag, always, imperishable, serenely, victoriously, be there.... This, O Lord, is our prayer, offered at Baltimore, the birthplace of this glorious anthem, in Maryland, fair elder daughter of American freedom.²⁴

Mid-decade also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, an occasion that prompted St. George L. Sioussat to compile a brief history of the journal in which he lauded the accomplishments and commitments of its editors, William Hand Browne, Louis H. Dielman, editor for twenty-seven years, and James W. Foster. These men, and the society as a whole, needed continuous financial support:





... for the future of the Magazine, and of all other activities of the Society, it will be well not to forget the moral that this present story points out . . . the work of able men, to reach its full effectiveness, demands adequate financial support that only the wealth of the community can give. ²⁵

A Tradition of Generosity

Since its founding in 1844 the Maryland Historical Society has existed primarily through the generosity of its benefactors. Dedicated members have perpetuated the society's missions and growth through generous giving of time, knowledge, and financial support. Space does not permit naming all those twentieth-century benefactors who left lasting bequests that nurture state history to this day. Those named below illustrate the benefits of scholarly as well as financial contributions.²⁶

J. Hall Pleasants (1873–1957) was a Johns Hopkins University physician, whose ill health forced him to surrender his practice. Subsequently, in addition to teaching at the university's medical school, Pleasants studied "history, genealogy, and antiquarianism." He edited sixteen volumes of the *Archives of Maryland*, authored *Maryland Silversmiths*, 1715–1830, and produced a photographic record of four thousand Maryland portraits. This record, now in the custody of the society, continues to serve anyone interested in Maryland portraiture and its subjects.



Richard Bennett Darnall bequeathed the funds for a children's museum. (Maryland Historical Society.)

Attorney Richard Bennett Darnall left half of his estate to the society for a "young people's museum of Maryland History," a "major advance in the development of the school cooperation program." Elizabeth Chew Williams, chair of the Committee on Maryland History in Schools, left \$201,000 to the endowment fund, which the society used to purchase the B. H. Latrobe architectural papers. Mrs. Jacob Blaustein funded the microfilming of the 1871–1902 run of the *Baltimore American*. Robert G. Merrick, with the Jacob and Annita France Foundation and the Robert G. and Anne Merrick Foundation, funded a new state history in commemoration of Maryland's 350th anniversary, and together these philanthropic groups endow the library director's salary. The society could not function without these and the thousands of other generous bequests received through its existence.

In addition to expanding collections, the society built additional staff into its operations, including a secretary to the director, a secretary to the librarian, a bookkeeper, a receptionist-switchboard operator, and, in 1957, established "the important position of registrar." Mrs. Virginia Swarm accepted the responsibility of that position.²⁷ The Women's Committee, formed in 1958, provided invaluable assistance to the staff, helped install exhibits, and worked as hostesses during "auspicious occasions." Increased staff placed a strain on the operating budget, and as a significant number left for better paying jobs, Manakee suggested an endowment for salaries. The institution, in building its collections and hiring the staff, once again wrestled with how to balance its accounts and fulfill its mission.

Increasing library acquisitions once again prompted a call for more space,

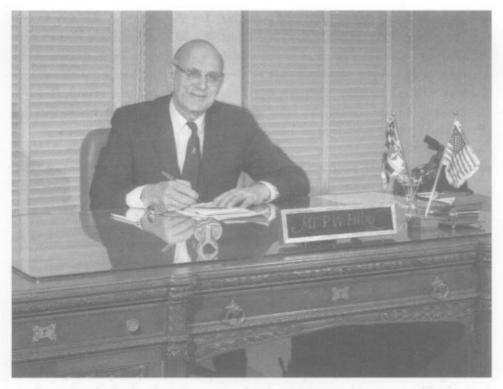
and director James Foster proposed guidelines for the collection that would end the past policy of accepting "almost any items offered." For guidance he met with the heads of leading city libraries such as the Pratt. Among the items discussed was whether to divide the materials that related to Maryland among participating libraries. Foster's sudden death on April 30, 1962, delayed this action. It was a "severe loss" to the society. All who wrote of his contributions noted that his efforts had "greatly advanced scholarly standing and civic contributions."

Harold Manakee assumed the directorship, and with the Thomas & Hugg plans in motion, the position became almost exclusively administrative. Two director's assistants assumed some of Foster's duties, which included supervision of the library and manuscripts division and determining the direction of the Historic Road Markers program. Later the same year, Jacob France, vice president and chair of finance, left \$250,000 for a Jacob and Annita France room or wing. The city's new Historical and Architectural Preservation Commission approved the plans, and Albert L. Penniman, chairman of the group, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony November 23, 1964. Manakee later noted that the Thomas bequest covered only construction and that "staffing . . . remains a considerable problem." ²⁸

One solution that controlled the inflow of memorabilia and therefore preserved space came with the adoption of a library collection policy in 1963. Henceforth the library would accept Maryland manuscripts, books "related to all aspects of the history of Maryland," books by Marylanders on Maryland subjects, special historical studies in the general field of Americana, and Maryland imprints prior to 1830. No longer would it accept "juvenilia," literary subjects, or non-Maryland books by Maryland authors.²⁹ This mandate allowed the librarian and Library Committee to consider weeding out and selling duplicate volumes, such as the 4,000 volumes that Louis Dielman had lent to the Peabody Institute in 1919. Filby estimated their worth at about \$20,000, but combined with duplicate pamphlets, newspapers, and sheet music, and including "unwanted" items, the de-acquisition netted over \$80,000 for the library. Some of the monies earned in the sale went toward conservation and preservation, since many items in the library's stores rested in an "alarming state of deterioration."³⁰

With the Thomas and Hugg expansion came improved quarters for the library, including the privately funded Rare Book Room, former home of the old portrait gallery.³¹ In a move that exposed its vast treasures to a wider pool of researchers, the collections became nationally accessible with their inclusion in the Library of Congress Union List of Manuscripts in 1971. The listing significantly increased the demand on library staff and facilities as scholars from across the country sought the information they contained.³²

In this period of rapid growth and change, Filby implemented his role and vision as head of the library:



Librarian P. W. Filby later served as director. (Maryland Historical Society.)

He should supervise the staff and see that the library is run efficiently; he should be on hand to help any reader, any member of the staff; but above all he must be available to talk to distinguished visitors, society members, historians, and would-be donors. He should keep closely in touch with neighboring librarians and libraries, and where ever possible attend any conference which has more than average value to the Society. At the moment the most important job . . . is to keep careful note of collections of Marylandia which might be given, visit prospective donors (after consultation with the Director) and in general have a riving commission.³³

Still another finding aid for scholars of Maryland history came from the State Board of Public Works in 1962 in response to requests from schools and public librarians, and with the support of state archivist Morris L. Radoff in the form of funding for an index to the first fifty volumes of the *Maryland Historical Magazine*. The society hired Betty Adler for the job.³⁴

This was the era when society leaders asked donors to support specific projects, to put their names on their personal interests. Manakee articulated his hope that a recent request for portrait restoration would "move others to make similar gifts . . . [such as a] furniture repair fund or a publications division. Each is a sore need":

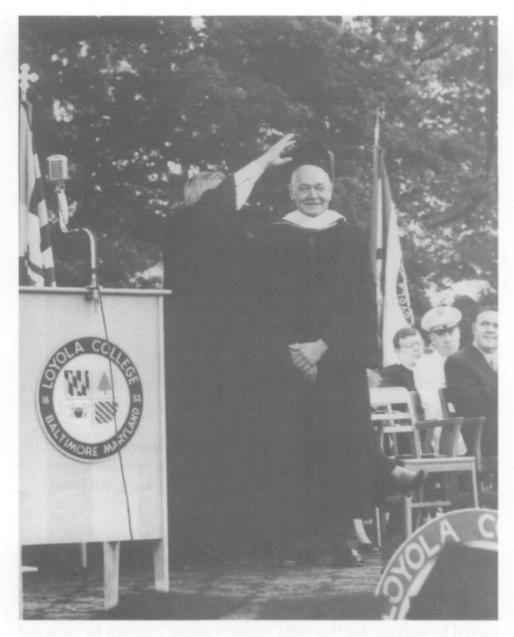


Thomas and Hugg "main floor," c. 1968. (Maryland Historical Society.)

By tradition, if not by definition, the chief concern of historical societies is the printed and the written word and for that reason this report has emphasized publications and acquisitions in books and manuscripts. It is hoped the emphasis will never lessen.³⁵

The popular director then hailed the society's "nationally famous" gallery and museum collections, portraits and furniture, miniatures, and costumes. "To be worthy of such treasures [the society] is obligated to increase its . . . efforts to disseminate information about them on every level, from scholarly study to the simple arousing of curiosity." In a now-familiar call for financial support, he reminded his audience that they might support a general campaign for funds that could be used for "non-recurrent expenses."

In addition to bolstering its own operations, the group promoted historical awareness throughout the state. The Special Projects Committee represented the MdHS among other historical groups, such as the county societies and patriotic organizations. They hosted a yearly conference of Maryland's historical societies and sponsored the annual Maryland Heritage Award for "outstanding achievement in historical preservation." Education programs grew steadily. In the near score of years since the society had opened its doors to school children, the num-



In the brief time that the society has employed directors few have gained the universal respect and praise awarded Harold R. Manakee upon his retirement in 1972. Samuel Hopkins, then president of the society, credited Manakee's success to his years as a naval officer, his educational background, and "a strong personal interest in history and a unique ability to deal with people. . . . [Through his] friendship he has enriched the experience of the officers, members, and staff." The retiring director had received a prestigious honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Baltimore's Loyola College the previous year. Although he officially stepped out of the day-to-day position, Manakee agreed to stay on as Director Emeritus and Consultant on Maryland History. Librarian P. W. Filby gained the directorship following Manakee's retirement. (Maryland Historical Society.)

bers of visiting students rose steadily to eight thousand, just 20 percent fewer than the ten thousand "casual visitors and tourists" in 1963.³⁶

Changes in History

Just as it had when the university-trained historians re-directed historical study away from the antiquarians' celebratory accounts in the Progressive Era, the profession once more experienced profound change in the decades following World War II. Legions of returning soldiers took advantage of the education provision in the G.I. Bill, and many earned graduate degrees. The diversity of this population in terms of ethnicity and class determined their areas of interest and prompted a dramatic shift in the study of American history. A great many turned away from politics, wars, and biographies of notable white men and found themselves attracted to previously neglected fields such as women's history, black history (beyond the paternalistic slavery monographs that dominated the scholarship), and ethnic histories. As the Civil Rights and Woman's Rights movements of mid-century gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, historians trained in the social sciences produced quantitative community studies that added yet another dimension to understanding the past from "the bottom up." The result, a virtual kaleidoscope of views, produced "the most extraordinary scholarly florescence that has occurred to date."37

With ethnic studies now an outstanding feature of American historical study, historians and communities received millions of dollars from universities, foundations, and government grants. Among the most noteworthy national projects was the restoration of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island in order that descendants of those European sojourners might walk away with a sense of their "immigrant experience." Ethnic genealogical and historical societies sprang up across the country as dedicated researchers devoted their energies and careers to uncovering the past beneath their feet. "Everyone's past" coalesced in Alex Haley's pathbreaking television series *Roots* and with the celebration of the country's bicentennial in 1976. History, previously deemed the birthright of the notable, suddenly belonged to all.

Local projects, some of them begun in the 1960s, included restoration of the old Peale Museum and the Mother Seton House. The Maryland Genealogical Society organized in 1959. Numbers of ethnic societies multiplied. County historical and genealogical groups formed and remain committed to their missions to preserve and disseminate information regarding their people and locales. This shift toward what is now called public history "goes beyond the confines of textbook, monograph, or journal article, that is, a history that is far more than a discourse among scholars."³⁸

As a consequence, the number of museums in the country doubled in the last half of the twentieth century. In the quarter century following the nation's bicentennial in 1976, history museums have "cropped up like mushrooms, commemorating people, places, events, and things heretofore unremarked." Museums and historical societies, no longer judged by their collections or scholarly research, became tourist attractions, whose success was measured in the numbers of visitors they attracted. History as "big business" dramatically changed institutional identity and public expectation. From a time "when museums were temples of contemplation and culture merited a capital 'C," many of these institutions evolved into entertainment centers, where visitors experience the past and "buy tasteful tchotchkes from gift shops." In full twentieth-century bloom, the phenomenon produced "a contradiction within the soul of museums since the time the public first gained access in the eighteenth century." 39

History For All

At the Maryland Historical Society, the numbers of people searching for their own family's histories—out of a simple curiosity to know from whence they came—increased dramatically. The library's renowned collections of church and parish records, ship passenger lists, manuscripts, and the meticulously copied indexes to early wills and land tracts gave and still give researchers the pieces of their genealogical puzzles. Among the indefatigable librarians and volunteers who assisted both the novice and professional family historian were Mary K. Meyer and Edna Kanely, who set high standards in service and contribution. Meyer edited the society's Maryland Magazine of Genealogy (1978-1982) during her tenure as librarian and compiled information on colonial Marylanders gleaned from obscure sources. Kanely's landmark works include the Directory of Maryland Church Records (1987) and the Directory of Maryland Ministers and the Churches They Served, 1634-1990 (1991). Today, librarian Francis O'Neill and volunteers Robert Barnes, Robert Bartram, and Ella Rowe, with members of the Maryland Genealogical Society, local patriotic societies, and numerous organizations, continue the tradition.40

Ethnic-themed events included "Christmas in Ukraine," a program of carols and folkways, in 1973, sponsored by the Ukrainian Education Association of Maryland, and later, African American and Native American Heritage Days. Although the society incorporated these newer historical interests into their public offerings, they continued to honor the Calvert legacy. The group donated a plaque to Kiplin Hall in Yorkshire, England, the ancestral home of the founding family, and works in partnership with the University of Maryland, College Park on research studies. Occasionally it sponsors trips to the British homeland for both scholars and tourists.⁴¹

Public history offerings touched every aspect of the society's activities, in the Monument street facility and across the state. Permanent installations and special



"Christmas in the Ukraine," 1973. (Maryland Historical Society.)

interest galleries included the Symington Memorial Sporting Arts Gallery and Library, the Radcliffe Maritime Museum (now at the satellite Fells Point Maritime Museum), the Darnall Young People's Gallery, Hands on History Gallery, the War of 1812 Gallery, the Thomas and Hugg 1847 parlor in the Enoch Pratt house, and, until the Civil War satellite museum opened on President Street, "A House Divided"—a one-room installation that combined the former Union and Confederate collections.

Seventeen thousand school children took tours, signed an indenture contract, walked through Pratt's house, examined Indian artifacts, and looked at the original manuscript of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. The society's educators provided pre- and post-visit materials, including "traveling trunks" filled with materials related to colonial, Native American, or maritime themes (among others). Scholarly and popular public programs attracted visitors to exhibit openings and closings, public lectures, performances, concerts, and Maryland Day festivities. Occasionally, as in September 1993, the society hosted a national, sold-out three-day symposium, "Classical Taste in Maryland and America," co-sponsored with the Baltimore Museum of Art. In its tradition of working with the Johns Hopkins University, the society initiated a program with the School of Continuing Studies and offered courses on Maryland history. Among the most popular and profitable events was the Maryland Antiques Show, which remained the society's "most important fundraiser" for years.

In the mid-1990s, the Maryland Historical Society proudly and productively fulfilled its "mission to serve the public through the museum and library . . . and through a publications program." They served 80,000 visitors and an additional 25,000 people off-site, while the *Maryland Historical Magazine* went to 4,500 members plus institutions. The facility housed 100,000 objects, including three centu-

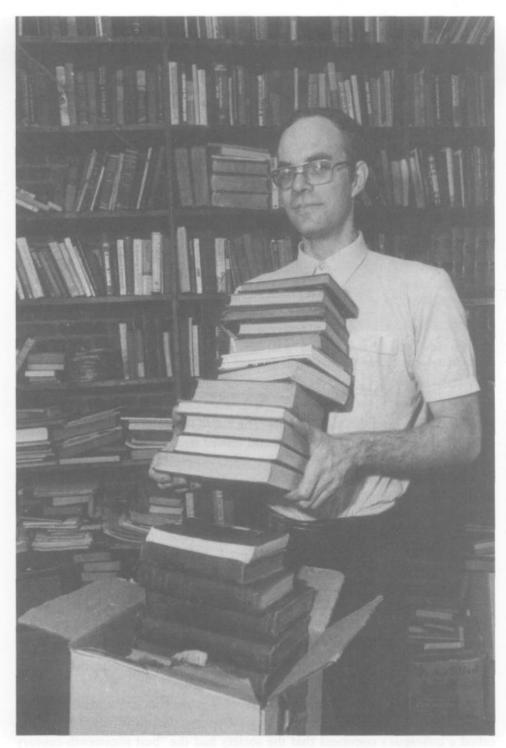
ries of war memorabilia, 3,000 paintings, 2,500 drawings (including the works of the Peale family, Joshua Johnson, and Francis Guy), 800 pieces of furniture, 3,500 pieces of silver, 2,000 pieces of glass and ceramics, 10,000 textiles, and 6,500 architectural drawings (much now in Howard Street storage).⁴²

The library cared for five million items, including eighty thousand books, pamphlets, journals, broadsides, bound newspapers, microfilm, rare books, sheet music, oral history tapes, newspaper clippings, family histories and genealogies. The Prints and Photographs collection numbered 250,000 original photographs, prints, maps, and pieces of ephemera. Many consider the *Star-Spangled Banner* manuscript and Benjamin Banneker's letters and journals among the most important holdings. The "importance and diversity . . . clear," the society held the resources for studies of all Marylanders and their pasts.⁴³

The new emphasis on diversity inspired temporary exhibits such as New York installation artist Fred Wilson's "Mining the Museum," a show that brought national attention to the staunchly conservative Maryland Historical Society. Wilson spent two months in residence and "mined" the collections for objects that spoke of his African American and West Indian heritage. Wilson displayed these objects next to artifacts more often associated with Maryland's elite white history. In a case marked "Metal Work," for example, Wilson arranged finely crafted silver next to slave shackles. Shocking to some and thought provoking for others, the show attracted more than ten thousand visitors and drew the attention of the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the London Times. The society created a smaller, permanent version of this provocative work in 1993.

Toward the Millennium and Beyond

The society celebrated its sesquicentennial in more traditional style and delighted members and visitors with an exhibit of its nineteenth-century Baltimore Album quilts. A team of independent researchers assisted gallery director Nancy E. Davis and her staff with identifying the needlewomen, preparing for the exhibit, developing education materials, and fundraising. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, with corporate and non-profit contributions, paid for Lavish Legacies: Baltimore Album and Related Quilts in the Collection of the Maryland Historical Society, a book-style catalog that accompanied the show. Director Dennis A. Fiori praised the efforts of all who contributed. "Lavish Legacies truly became a perfect blend of community support and cooperation combined with museum staff work, and like a quilt made of many snippets of fabric, the result has been far greater than the sum of its parts." Under Fiori's leadership the number of changing exhibits per year increased dramatically and the society defined its plans for yet another expansion—one that would connect the buildings on the Monument Street campus and add additional gallery space for exhibitions,



Librarian Francis P. O'Neill, 1982. (Maryland Historical Society.)



Members of the Decoy Committee cataloging the collection, 1990. From left to right, Henry Stansbury, Vance Strausburg, C. John Sullivan, Joe Engers, and Lloyd Cargile. (Courtesy Henry Stansbury.)

storage, and "behind the scenes" tours. The board launched an ambitious capital campaign to finance the construction and moved steadily toward the goal during its first phase.

In 1997, President of the Board Stanard T. Klinefelter and Chairman of the Board Jack S. Griswold reported that it had been "a watershed year" for the Maryland Historical Society. In particular, the Heritage Gallery in the former Greyhound Bus terminal, a gift from the city in 1995, opened to the enthusiastic support of 450 people, including Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke and Governor Parris Glendening. The capital campaign for the new building got off to a "terrific" start with fourteen of the targeted twenty million dollars raised. The governor and the state legislature had provided 2.2 million dollars in bond funds, and the officers encouraged further support in order that the society might be able to display more than the current 5 percent of its holdings. The society then gained the collections of the Baltimore City Life Museum, now merged with those of the historical society, after the former institution closed.

Technology came, at last, into the library in 1997/1998 under David DeLorenzo's guidance. De Lorenzo, the France-Merrick Deputy Director for the Library, recalled a colleague's comment that the society had the "best nineteenth-century library in the state when it came to computers." Over the reluctance of some long-time volunteers, employees, and patrons, who did not quite trust any aid but the



Prints and Photographs Curator Mary Markey, 1999. (Maryland Historical Society.)

old card catalog, the society's nerve center moved into the technological age. The online catalog, after multiple upgrades, now serves researchers beyond its walls, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, across the state, the country, and around the globe.⁴⁶

The end of the twentieth century brought the society high acclaim in the form of a "Save America's Treasures" grant from the National Park Service. This program, originating with the White House Millennium Council, celebrated the "rich heritage" and accomplishments of twentieth-century America. Fiori traveled to the White House in June 1999 and received the award from First Lady Hillary Clinton. The \$180,000 grant went toward conserving, among other paper artifacts, the *Star-Spangled Banner* manuscript and several of Latrobe's watercolor drawings of the early nineteenth-century Capitol building and White House furnishings. Public programs and education thrived as well.⁴⁷

Since its first organized outreach efforts in the mid-1940s, the Maryland Historical Society has made educating the public a high priority. "The core of our mission is to protect the Maryland Historical Society's superb collection of Maryland material and increase access to the information it provides." Fiori summarized the society's educational goals in 2000 and noted the wide reach of the division's programs. The impressive 8,000 visiting school children that Manakee noted in 1963 had grown exponentially in the quarter-century following his report.

More than 47,000 school children visited the society in 1999, and state teachers integrated twenty-six outreach programs into their lesson plans. Programs for the general public, adults, children, and families expanded as well, as the society designed offerings that invited all to participate in "Hands on History" experiences. Among the most popular were the History Haversacks stuffed with



Registrar Louise Brownell, right, with Paul Rubenson, packing Baltimore Album quilts for the exhibition in Japan, 1999. (Maryland Historical Society.)

games, crafts, and scavenger hunts, all related to exhibits. Children played in the colonial kitchen, tried on period clothing, and climbed into sailor's bunks in the Maritime rooms. Education director Janet Surrett said that unlike many facilities where children and adults experienced separate learning, "[We] take an innovative approach . . . our many hands-on activities make the MHS an ideal destination for families to enjoy together." In one of several joint projects, the education and library staffs, with the assistance of the press, created the popular Primary Source Kits, select original documents, arranged topically, for the classroom.

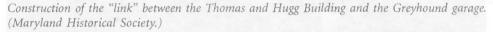
Book publishing also grew exponentially in the mid-1990s as the leadership elevated this essential activity to a fully functioning component of its work. Although the society had upheld its mission to put forth the printed word, first in addresses, documents, pamphlets, the *Archives of Maryland*, the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, and the occasional book, it lacked the internal structure and expertise necessary to produce a steadily growing list of new books. *MdHM* editor Ernest Scott, retired publisher, envisioned a small press within the society, advocated for its support, and applied his expertise to the plan. In a short time, with Robert I. Cottom as editor and publisher, the Press at the Maryland Historical Society brought out twenty-two books, including *After Chancellorsville: Letters from the Heart; The Chesapeake: An Environmental Biography; A Monument to Good Intentions: The Story of the Maryland Penitentiary; The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1645–1646; On Afric's Shore: A History of Mary-*

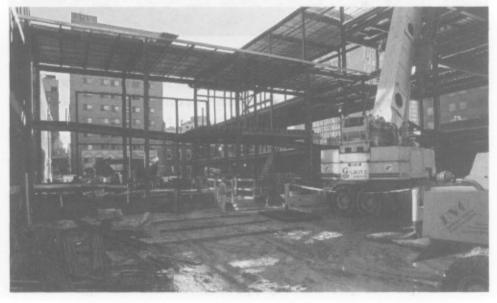
land in Liberia; and Hanging Henry Gambrill: The Violent Career of Baltimore's Plug Uglies, 1854–1860. Each brought forth another piece of Maryland's story. Some, such as On Afric's Shore, came directly from the library's collections. Many received high praise from reviewers and several won prestigious awards. With the now venerable Maryland Historical Magazine, the Press attracted the best of Maryland's historians.⁴⁹

A City Block Plus

As the construction crew broke ground for the new building, most of the staff prepared to move across the parking lot to the former Greyhound bus station in late summer 2000. Associate Curator Barbara Weeks spent many anticipatory moments watching the jackhammers and bulldozers tear up the old parking lot and scoop away the twentieth century. Under the concrete and asphalt, sunlight lit the bits and pieces of broken china, bottles, pottery—and dozens of oyster shells, many the width of a man's hand—for the first time in more than a century. This history underfoot generated excitement among the staff, even as we learned that our "home for Maryland history" sits atop a former trash heap. A bit chagrined, we returned to work, disappointed that we had not found valuable artifacts, yet consoled in that the size of those oyster shells testified undeniably to the abundance once attributed to the Chesapeake Bay. Captain John Smith did not exaggerate.

The newly renovated Maryland Historical Society opened with an evening gala in November 2003, amidst much fanfare and publicity. The massive facility







Homecoming gala, November 2003. (Maryland Historical Society.)

includes the Beard Pavilion, the Carey Center, and state-of-the-art storage for more than two thousand paintings. Permanent exhibits include "Looking for Liberty: An Overview of Maryland History" in the Carey Center, Maryland Through the Artists Eye" in the William C. Whitridge Gallery, and "Furniture in Maryland Life" in the Dorothy Wagner Walis Gallery. Additionally, the Carey Center holds the Claire McCardell Gallery, a permanently dedicated space for changing textile exhibitions and the Tell Us Your Stories Gallery, centrally located and featuring recent acquistions to the museum and the library. "Served in Style: SIlver from the Maryland Historical Society Collections," on the second floor of the Beard Pavilion, features highlights in our renowned collection.

The renovated library, now the H. Furlong Baldwin Library, more than doubles the previous space and is equipped with wireless technology. Today's re-



Opening to the public, November, 2003. (Maryland Historical Society.)

searchers work in a well-lit and spacious room with access to society holdings as well as internet access to collections around the world. Among the capstones of the expansion and additions is the McIlvaine Special Collections Reading Room, gift of Dorothy McIlvaine Scott. This space is beautifully renovated with lustrous dark wood paneling, elegant fireplace mantles, and oriental-style carpet—quietly inviting, and so very like the nineteenth-century environment in which the founders first pulled together the remnants of the past.

In keeping with the founders' passion for telling Maryland's story, the society's leadership, staff, and volunteers carry out today's mission, securing the institution's place among contemporary cultural organizations. Deputy Director of Collections Jeannine Disviscour, perpetually enthusiastic and optimistic, stated:

We need to live and breathe the importance of Maryland history to all! This conviction has to be clear in all we do: exhibitions, programming and in what we publish. We have to show how this understanding helps us today and will help us in the future. We need to figure out ways to allow people to connect personally and meaningfully with Maryland's history. We have to continue to advocate for the importance of history in all levels of education—elementary, middle, high school and college levels and develop appropriate exhibits, programs, and books to draw teachers and students to our resources. We need to be in the public eye and keep what we do relevant to those outside our four walls.⁵⁰

Final Thoughts

Nineteenth-century society leaders took pride in maintaining a debt-free organization and worked with great wisdom and frugality through lean financial times. Twentieth-century leaders faced economic challenges far beyond the scope of those the founders and their immediate successors could have envisioned. Expansion projects begun in sound economic climates led to accumulations of debt as endowment income, derived primarily from investments, dropped with the stock market. The stunning addition that in 2000 connected the Thomas and Hugg building to the former Greyhound garage added much-needed exhibit, gift- shop, and public-entry space. Even so, expansion brought with it heavy financial burdens.

As of late 2006, facing these challenges, the society demonstrated considerable resilience and resourcefulness. The society's officers and members of the board of trustees called for renewed efforts at economy and new approaches to funding the essential work of the organization. They, with the staff, invested countless hours and great energy to ensure that critical activities, whether related to the gallery, library, publications, or education outreach, continued to meet the needs and enrich the experience of members, visitors, researchers, college students, and school children.

With such dedication and creativity, trustees, staff, and volunteers will continue—for another 162 years and longer—to preserve and interpret Maryland's part in the American story.

Notes

- 1. "Maryland Tercentenary," Vertical file, MdHS Library; "Meeting Held in Maryland Historical Society Building, Baltimore, Maryland," December 18, 1928, Notes in Sam Hopkins's files (hereinafter cited Sam Hopkins Papers) in possession of the author, May 2005.
- 2. "Meeting," 6; Cox, "Century of Frustration," 106, 114; Hollowak, "Library," 23. The society transferred the colonial documents in its care to Annapolis in 1943.
- 3. Cox, "Century of Frustration," 108, 111. JHU Professor Herbert Baxter Adams re-ignited the society's interest in collecting documents. The effort resulted in free public access for researchers and the *Archives of Maryland* series, Anderson, "Laying the Foundation," 170–83.
- 4. Proceedings of the Society, March, 1934.
- 5. Raphael Semmes Jr. (1890–1952) authored Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1937); Crime and Punishment in Early Maryland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), and Baltimore as Seen by Visitors, 1783–1860 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1953). All remain popular.
- 6. *Proceedings of the Society*, February 13, 1933. The donors were undoubtedly the descendants of Charles James Madison Eaton, Peabody trustee, art collector, and early member of the Maryland Historical Society. For Maryland and Baltimore during the Depression, see Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 494–518 and Olson, *Baltimore*, 332–46.
- 7. Ibid. *Proceedings of the Society*, February 13, 1933; The membership stood at just 1,163 in 1938 yet doubled by the end of World War II, Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 92.
- 8. Proceedings of the Society, April 11, 1938. "Editorial Change," MdHM, 33 (1938), 1.
- 9. Manakee, "Quarter Century," 61-62; Truman's address is published in the MdHM, 39 (1945): 85-89.
- 10. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 62; This new status altered the long-standing relationship between the Library Committee and the librarian. Foster became a member of the committee and answered to the council.

The society has had eleven directors: James W. Foster, 1942–1962; Harold Manakee, 1962–1972, P. W. Filby, 1972–1978; Romaine Stec Sommerville, 1978–1984; J. Jefferson Miller II, 1984–1988; Barbara Wells Sarudy, 1989; Charles T. Lyle, 1989–1993; William Amos, Acting, 1993; Dennis A. Fiori, 1993–2005; Robert W. Rodgers, (with Henry Stansbury) Acting, January–July 2006; W. Eric Emerson, July–October, 2006; Robert W. Rodgers, Acting, October 2006–.

- 11. Report of the Library, February 15, 1966, MdHS Papers.
- 12. Cox, "Century of Frustration," 113; Samuel K. Dennis, "A Brief Summary of the Maryland Historical Society's Hundred Years," *MdHM*, 39 (1944): 1–3.
- 13. Dennis, "A Brief Summary," 2-3.
- 14. Ibid., 5.
- 15. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 62-63.
- 16. Ibid., 81.
- 17. Maryland in World War II, Volume I, Military Participation (Baltimore: War Records Division, Maryland Historical Society, 1950), vii—viii. Subsequent volumes addressed the "contributions of business and industry, home front service organizations, and those who gave their lives in the service of the state and nation."
- 18. For post-war Maryland, see Brugger, Middle Temperament, 552-73.
- 19. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 64. The Wheeler Leaflet project continued through 1952, at which time Manakee reported that the society, now sole producer of the articles, lacked the personnel to continue the series.

- 20. *The Baltimore Sun* purchased the Marion Brewington Maritime Collection in 1956 and donated it to the society.
- 21. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 65. The society in 1949 bought 209 and 211 West Monument Street in order to have the land necessary for the new wing.
- 22. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 71–72; "Society Plans Major Expansion," *MdHM*, 58 (1963), 171.
- 23. "The Unveiling of the Original Star Spangled Banner," *MdHM* 49 (1954), 259–70; Scott Sheads and Anna Von Lunz, "Defenders' Day, 1815–1998: A Brief History," *MdHM*, 93 (1998): 301–15; Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 67.
- 24. "Unveiling," 260.
- 25. St. George L. Sioussat, "After Fifty Years: A Review of the Beginnings," MdHM, 50 (1955), 281.
- 26. This is a sampling of donors. Omission from this account does not minimize the significance or appreciation of those whose names do not appear.
- 27. J. Hall Pleasants, A Memorial Exhibition, Sponsored Jointly by the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Maryland Historical Society (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1958), 5–9; Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 68.
- 28. "President's Report," Annual Report, 1963.
- 29. Minutes of the Library Committee, September 20, 1963, MdHS Papers. For the complete acquisitions policy, see this report.
- 30. Sam Hopkins Papers.
- 31. Minutes of the Library Committee, May 13, 1968, MdHS Papers.
- 32. Ibid., October 16, 1971, MdHS Papers.
- 33. Report of the Library, February 15, 1966, MdHS Papers. Hester Rich, Thomas Eader, and Thomas Lombardi determined, for organizational ease, that a "lot [is] defined as the gift of a single member, no matter the size."
- 34. Hence, researchers find two indexes to the *MdHM*, Adler's and a second that begins with volume 51.
- 35. Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 76-77.
- 36. "Maryland Historical Society Activities," Annual Report, 1963.
- 37. Higham, "Ethnic Historical Societies," 37; Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies*, 167. The American Association of State and Local History, formed in 1940, reported upwards of two thousand member societies in 1961. The author writes that only a third of these societies reported libraries, some which may have contained just a few shelves of "miscellaneous books that might include somebody's set of Waverly novels."
- 38. Urofsky, "The Virginia Historical Society," 156.
- 39. Barry Dressel, "It All Comes Round Again: Anticipating the Modern Museum in Baltimore, ca. 1820," *Maryland Humanities*, November 2001, 2.
- 40. The Maryland Genealogical Society is housed at the MdHS.
- 41. "Sunday Program Series," Sam Hopkins Papers; *News and Notes of the Maryland Historical Society*, September 1973; "Lord Baltimore Study Tour," *MHS* News, July—September, 1999.
- 42. Sam Hopkins Papers, 1993, collections policy, "objects made or originally used in Maryland, those by Maryland artists and craftsmen, those that have a direct connection to an event in Maryland history, and those that depict Maryland individuals, scenes, or events."
- 43. Sam Hopkins Papers.
- 44. Jennifer Faulds Goldsborough, Lavish Legacies: Baltimore Album and Related Quilts in the Collection of the Maryland Historical Society (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1994). The society featured a second album quilt show in 2001, as popular and well-attended as the first. For a comprehensive study of the quilts, their makers, and the world in which

these women lived, see Nancy E. Davis, *The Baltimore Album Quilt Tradition* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1998).

- 45. "From the Leadership," Annual Report, 1997.
- 46. "MHS Library: Moving into the 21st Century, MHS News, Winter 1999.
- 47. "Maryland Historical Society Receives 'Save America's Treasures' Grant," MHS News, July–September, 1999. Other grants, from both private and public foundations and programs included the Mellon award to digitize the photograph collection, a Luce grant to digitize the painting collection, and a National Endowment for the Humanities award for a summer institute for teachers.
- 48. MHS News, January-March, 2000.
- 49. For calls to form a publications division see, for example, Manakee, "A Quarter Century," 76–77, and "Director's Report," *MdHM*, 76 (1981): 332.
- 50. Author's survey of senior staff, January 2006.

Gallery of Presidents 1844–2006

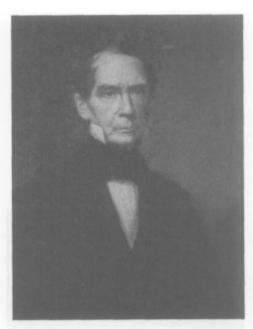
"The most prestigious civic position in the city was that of President of the Maryland Historical Society." *

This gallery salutes those who have taken on that role and its accompanying challenges and responsibilities. All brought a spirit of volunteer service and a love of Maryland history. In 2002, Barbara Katz became the society's first woman president. Katz, now Chairperson of the Board, began her work with the 1979 Antiques Show. She states "my long association with the society, in many roles, gave me a broad perspective from which to approach my position." She is now part of the Strategic Planning Committee.

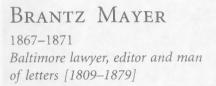
Family tradition attracted others. Current President Henry Stansbury inherited his dedication to the MdHS from his mother and has served the society since 1990, first as chair of a wildfowl decoy committee and later as Museum Committee Chair. His election to the presidency came at a time of great transition and, with the Board of Trustees, he has labored diligently and creatively.

It is also appropriate to note, in this tribute to leadership, those who have supported the society for fifty years or more—Samuel Hopkins, Dorothy McIlvaine Scott, and J. Fife Symington Jr.

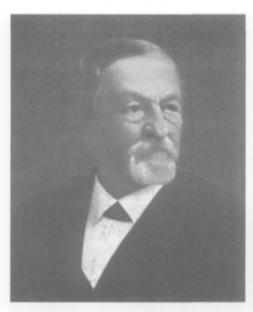
Isaac Fein, The Making of an American Jewish Community . . . 1773–1920 (1985): 227



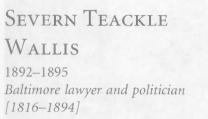
JOHN SPEAR SMITH 1844–1867 Baltimore lawyer, soldier and man of letters. [1786–1866]



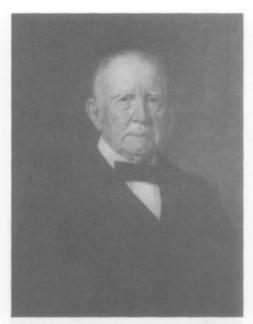




JOHN H.B. LATROBE 1871–1892 Baltimore lawyer, inventor and man of letters [1803–1891]

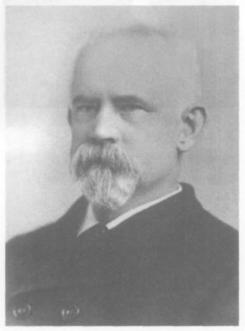






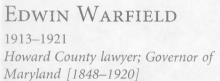
JOHN G. MORRIS 1895–1896 Baltimore clergyman and scholar [1803–1895]

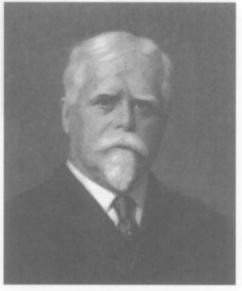
ALBERT RITCHIE
1896–1903
Baltimore lawyer [1834–1903]





MENDES COHEN 1903–1913 Baltimore civil engineer and scholar [1831–1915]







W. HALL HARRIS
1921–1935
Baltimore businessman and Postmaster
[1852–1938]

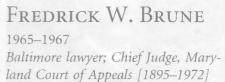
CLINTON L. RIGGS

1935–1938 Baltimore civil engineer; Adjutantgeneral of Maryland [1866–1938]





GEORGE L. RADCLIFFE 1938–1965 Baltimore lawyer and politician; U.S. Senator [1877–1974]

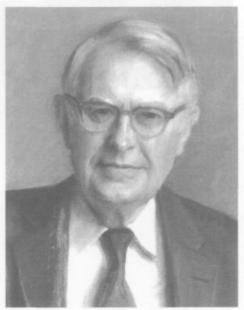


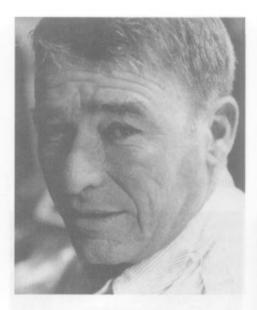




WILLIAM C. BAXTER 1967–1970 Baltimore lawyer and soldier [1901–1970]

SAMUEL HOPKINS
1970–1975
Baltimore Lawyer and politician [1913–]





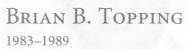
JOHN L. McShane 1975–1976 Baltimore architect [1930–]







Frank H. Weller Jr. 1980–1983

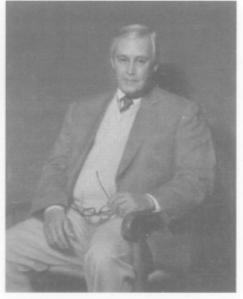


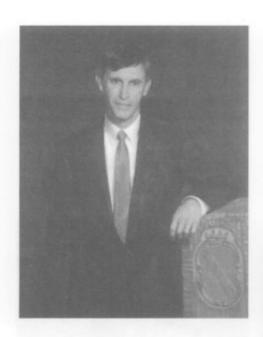




E. MASON HENDRICKSON 1989–1992 Banker [1922–2004]







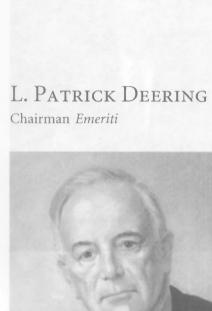
STANARD T. Klinefelter 1997–2002

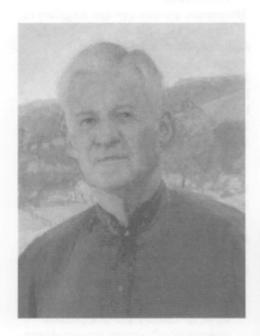






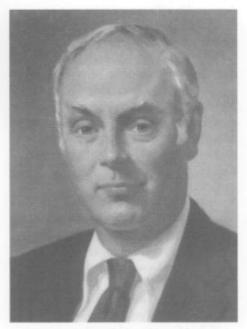
Henry H. Stansbury 2005-





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WILLIAM WHITRIDGE Chairman *Emeriti*



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